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PC REVIEW

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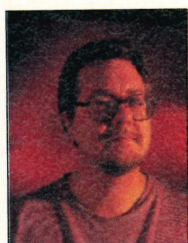


THE UNDERGROUND EPIC. AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 1995



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December 1995 Issue 50



As Mark Patterson writes in his review of it this issue, Windows 95 is probably the lowest scoring essential buy ever, but you don't really have a choice when it

comes to upgrading. And as the pace of technological change moves so quickly, where next for the PC? There are people out there who actually predict the demise of the PC in the next century – and they're given their chance to air their views in this month's cover feature. You'll also read the views of PC traditionalists who disagree. Who's right? Only time and yourselves will be the judges. In the meantime, a little sooner than the next millennium, watch out for our Christmas issue next month. See you then.

Steve James,
Managing Editor

Cover Story

8 They're the movers and the shakers who are building multimedia empires and Golgothan shopping malls the length of the infobahn. And some of them believe the multimedia PC has had its day, as Jim Gillies discovers.

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The Dutch have tulips, cheese, a bicycling monarch and a nasty-looking side dish made of raw minced meat... Now they're playing host to some of the most impressive displays of new VR hardware in Europe. Adam Peters dismounts and finds out.



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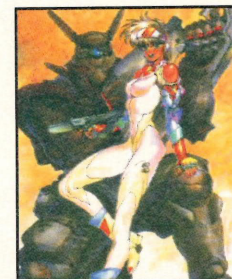
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Coverdisks

A blistering assault on the games sense this month with super sim AIV Network\$ plus Wing Commander IV, Hexen, the latest Doom-along from Doom creators, id, and we don't skimp on the applications either – there's a £79.95 music creation package and the new demo of the latest Picture Publisher.




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It's no mere Doom clone (although it's by its makers), it's better than Heretic, and most of all it's brilliant fun!

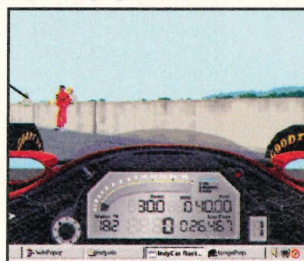


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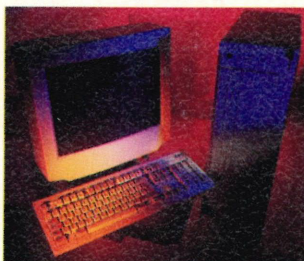
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Packed with goodies, The Dan Ultimate is also one of the fastest PCs we've ever laid eyes on – but is it any good?



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50 tricky problems

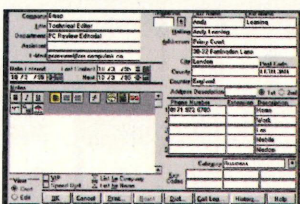
But not for our resident Q&A expert, Mike James, who celebrates our 50th issue by answering your 50 most commonplace technical enquiries. Tough call, eh?

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By now you should have a pretty good idea of how our September cover disc utility can help you organise your own time. So now it's time to see how it can really sharpen up your act.

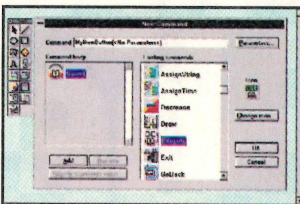


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SMARTBook 4

Fed up with reviewing the fastest, biggest and best in PC hardware, Andy Leaning takes time out to bring you this month's tutorial. This time around he looks at creating new commands using SMARTBook (the utility we gave away on October's cover CD).



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COVER **feature**

We, the people, have the right to bear PCs



There's a battle for the future of your PC and if some major players have their way it might not exist for much longer. Jim Gillies talks to the fighters.

Battles about the future of the PC are nothing new. MS DOS vs PC DOS, Windows vs OS/2, Intel chips vs AMD clones, CISC vs RISC, Microsoft vs Apple, modem standards, video compression — the list is lengthy. The one thing that's never been in doubt before now however, is that the PC would always come through, usually in a form more

this will probably take the form of a simple keyboard and mouse based terminal connected to the TV, an electrical socket and a telecommunications network.

If you want to do some word processing on the network computer all you'll need to do is choose a basic text editor from the on-line menu and then download it from the network faster than Word loads from your hard drive.

"We have the right to bear processing power."

Mike Sullivan,
Intel
Corporation

powerful and economic than before. But now two major high-tech players are lining up for a battle that the PC may not return from and the battle cry is "network computers".

When the phrase "network computer" is first mentioned most people think of — e-mail, easy back-up, sending documents to colleagues and, of course, networked Doom. The reality is an idea that may well make the PC as obsolete as valve radios and change the world in the process. Rather like an iceberg, you'll only see the tip of the network computer —

Need to spell check it? Download a spell checking module and then delete it once you're finished. Aside from a keyboard, a few Mbs of RAM and a cheap processor, the user end of the network computer will bear little resemblance to your PC. Your hard disk space will probably be in another town and you'll have access to a 1000mhz chip in a French mainframe for those graphics rendering jobs.

And no, the idea is not as ridiculous as it first seems. As we found when we talked to the big boys at Oracle and Intel.

Intel and Oracle are headed up by two of the toughest players in the industry. Shake hands and come out fighting.

Intel

Name: Andrew Grove

Position: CEO and co-founder Intel

Age: 58

Co-founded Intel in 1968

Money: As a founder of Intel his stake is worth \$102 million, but Chairman Gordon Moore's 5.6% is worth about \$2.5 billion more.

Trivia: A Hungarian émigré, Grove name was Andras Grof before arriving in the U.S in 1957.

What they say: He's a natural born worrier.

Oracle

Name: Lawrence Ellison

Position: CEO Oracle Corporation

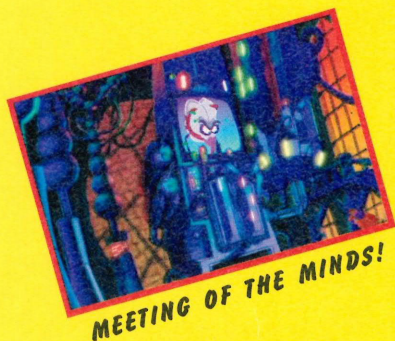
Age: 51

Money: Poorly paid (earning just \$2.4 million), but at least he has \$3 billion of Oracle stock to keep him warm at nights.

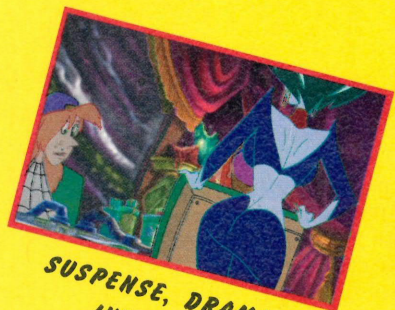
What they say: Fitness freak (he runs triathlons) Ellison is also somewhat of a ladies man and has to date three divorces behind him.

GET THE GAME OR THE SHORT,
FAT, GREEN GUY
BUYS IT!

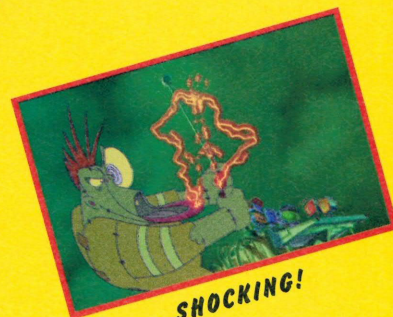
BRAIN DEAD 13



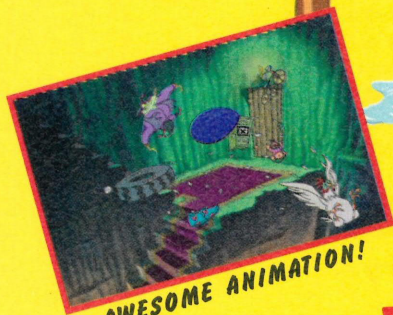
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INTRIGUE!



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PC CDROM

DODGE HOOKS, EVADE THE ALWAYS WELL
ARMED FRITZ, AND HUNT DOWN THE EVIL DR.
HERO NEUROSIS AS YOU RACE THROUGH HIS
TWISTED CASTLE, BUT ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE
OUT OR THIS EXPLOSIVELY INTERACTIVE
EXPERIENCE WILL BLOW YOUR MIND!

WARNING:
Extreme Cartoon Violence!

No cartoon characters were maimed or
mutilated during the making of this game.

empire
INTERACTIVE

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Network Computer Supporter

In spite of the fact that relatively few people have even heard of the idea, the network computer (NC) is being driven, not by some garage based eccentric, but by Oracle Corporation, a multi-billion dollar giant, which already provides the software backbone to much of the internet.

The project is being developed by Oracle at its New Media division in California, where I talked to vice-president Andy Laursen. I began by asking him about the origins of the idea:

"It's actually a pretty simple idea. If you look at the evolution of the way people use computers, it went from isolated main frames to a PC on every desk, but now there are more main frames and super servers than ever and the number is growing. The idea grew out of looking at what people want to do with their PCs. They want to send or receive e-mail, do some word processing and browse the web. Some companies already have very fast networks and that led us to the idea of network computers.

We already have PCs, so what can network computing offer that they can't?

"Look at the situation in schools. You have, at best, one computer between a whole class of children. But what if you're looking at \$500 for a network computer instead of \$3000 a PC? It's not unreasonable to envisage a situation where each child has their own network computer then.

"In terms of the consumer market, analysts believe there are 100 million households with PCs, but about 70% of those PCs are either obsolete or very rarely used. Of the remaining 30%, about 10 million do not use it for work.

Grove (Intel CEO Andy Grove) predicts that every one of them will have a multimedia PC by 1998. I don't buy that.

"With the price point of network computers the average home will probably have several by then. One in the kitchen — perhaps used mainly as a video phone, another replacing the TV in the main room and several wireless PAs (Personal Assistants)."

One of the biggest questions anyone who's ever used the net will ask is, how can you maintain a reliable link with the server?

"I think the real question is, how do you download the software and data. I mean, 4Mb of flash RAM costs about \$12, and with that you can cache the last operating system you

downloaded or the last few meg of data. Most companies already have reliable, high speed networking and I don't think schools will be far behind. Even for consumers, high speed ISDN connection (about 128 kbs — kilo bytes per second) is very easy and relatively cheap — at least in the US. The existing Web underpins the whole idea."

Intel argues that people want to have, "The right to bear processing power" to paraphrase the US Constitution? How do you respond?

"Well I'm a little surprised to hear the company quoting the constitution, but I think I'd respond by saying, "well it would, wouldn't it?" Intel basically has a monopoly. If you're selling 100 bit chips for \$800 each then you have a lot to lose. Actually, I don't think PCs are going to disappear overnight, but we expect to see a situation where hundreds of manufacturers will be producing network computers. I know some people have expressed concern about the security of their data if its held on a remote server, but you have to remember we've been designing systems to protect valuable corporate data for years. Oracle knows how to do encryption."

Intel and Microsoft have invested billions in the PC. How can you hope to compete against them?

"Well for a start, it's not Oracle alone versus Intel and Microsoft. When I returned from Telecom 95 in Geneva (where Laursen presented Oracle's vision of network computers) I had 35 calls from major companies interested in getting involved, including some from companies who had started work in a similar vein.

"The key is dependable servers, but I think we're gaining mind share. In the next few year the computer paradigm will shift and we'll see millions of NCs in households. Network computers instantly solve the classic PC problems of maintenance and cost. I think that's going to count for a lot and the market will build. NCs will be more economical than PCs.

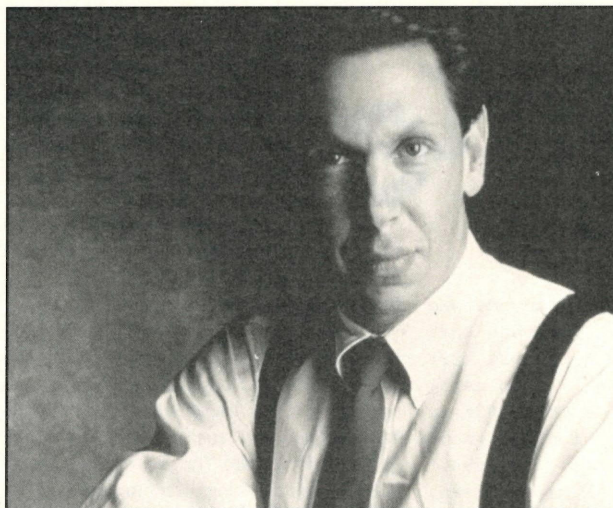
Entertainment seem to be the computer holy grail right now. Will network computers be able to handle multimedia and games as well as a PC?

"Better than! It'll be fully multimedia with an MPEG decoder probably fitted as standard and you'll be logged onto a server giving you, perhaps, 2000 films at your fingertips."

What about games?

"Someone will more than likely build a network computer with a CD-ROM, but just look at the Sega Channel. Downloading games over a network and playing them on your Genesis (Mega Drive). What is that but gaming on a network?

"The other impact will be more games available. At the moment it's really difficult to fight for shelf space if you want to publish a game. Not a problem with NCs.



What impact will network computing have had by the year 2000?

"For a start there'll be more NCs than PCs. Buying a network computer will be just like buying a phone. With NCs the information revolution will be real (to borrow a phrase from Apple) "for the rest of us". I think it'll be the appliance approach to information and we'll quickly see the price of broadband drop."

When will we see the first NCs and what will Oracle's role be?

"We should see the first appliances in stores by the end of next year. The best model to look at is the market for phones and VCRs. The newest NC will be in the family room while the children get last years model in their rooms. Oracle's role will be to build the server technology, but we plan to produce NCs to prove the technology. At the same time we're very committed to making this an open system, based on the models of MPEG and the World Wide Web."

What sums up the idea for you?

"I recently received a message on my voice mail service from an old lady who said, "Bless you kids! Get on and make those things. I really want to be on the internet but I'm scared of computers." It might sound a little corny but that's what it's about for me."

"By the year 2000 there will be more network computers than personal computers." Andy Laursen, Oracle Corporation

ORACLE®

"A ridiculously over-engineered device"

Oracle CEO, Larry Ellinson, on the PC

Personal Computer Champion

Supplying more than 80% of the chips going into today's PC, with a potential market of over 100 million processing power hungry consumers by the year 2000 and an 1995 investment of \$3.5 billion, Intel has more to lose than any other company in the PC world. I talked to Intel's Mike Sullivan about the threat from network computing.

What's Intel's view on network computers?
"I think you need to look more carefully at what network computing really means.

intel

Usually network computing means networked PCs — it's hard to see people going from that back to connections of dumb terminals. Anyone who proposes that people will stop using their PCs is fooling themselves.

"People want freedom to compute when they want to compute, to print when they want to print and to play when they want to play. That's a form of empowerment.

"I don't think people are really ready to be tied to that sort of system. Look at the situation with automobiles. For years people have been saying that mass transit was the way of the future but you don't see people deserting their Fords or Peugeots. They've had a taste of freedom and they don't want to give it up.

"Anyone who proposes that people will stop using their PCs is fooling themselves."
Mike Sullivan,
Intel
Corporation

Is the loss of freedom a reality?

"Absolutely a reality. I mean, look at what you can do with a PC. You can surf the net, you can print, you can play games. It's a platform for working, playing and educating.

"The people proposing network computers are the people who don't understand the PC. They're from the old school of thought. In the end, PCs really aren't all that expensive and Intel's goal is to double the processing power each year at the same price point. For



example, the Pentium processor was more widely adopted in the home than in the office."

The proponents of NC argue that a lot of PC hardware is only accessed occasionally.

"The people proposing network computers are the people who don't understand the PC."

**Mike Sullivan,
Intel Corporation**

How do you respond to that?

"Well, I can't imagine what that is. The applications being developed now assume that people have processing power. Being on the net is all very well but you know what it's like when traffic gets busy. With the processing power right there in front of you, you can make a personal

decision to log off and do something else with your PC.

"To paraphrase the Constitution, 'we have the right to bear processing power'."

**Bruno Brunel
Chairman of Infogrames**

What form will the PC take by the year 2000?

By the year 2000 the PC will be gone, although before anyone panics what I mean is the word PC. At home you'll have numerous connected devices integrated into your everyday life and their forms will vary from a 3D touchscreen on a desk, to a microphone integrated into teaching books.

What will the home user be doing with it?
They'll be learning with simulators, sending multimedia letters and paying bills via networks.

How will computers have changed the world by the year 2000?

Computers have one incredible talent — they expand human potential. I think we'll learn with computers to build a more humanised world.

How will you have changed the world by the year 2000?

I don't see my goal as changing the world, but as helping people to understand the changes.

**Peter Molyneux
MD of Bullfrog**

What form will the PC take by the year 2000?

It'll be at least 20 times faster than it is today. Perhaps it will finally become the home entertainment system that everyone has been talking about.

What will the home user be doing with it?
A lot. Shopping for all the major purchases, making travel arrangements and as their main source of communication.

How will computers have changed the world by the year 2000?

Primarily through the Internet, which will have replaced traditional forms of communication and commerce.

How will you have changed the world by the year 2000?

I can't really say how I'll have changed the world but I can see that I'll have stopped reading the Beano.

**Eva Pascoe
Co-owner of Cyberia Cafe**

What form will the PC take by the year 2000?

I think the PC will become a Personal Communicator as opposed to a Personal Computer. We'll store less on our local machines and rely almost entirely on remote storage.

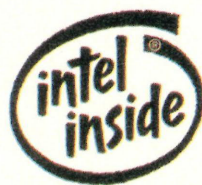
What will the home user be doing with it?
More "feminised" tasks will be automated, such as caring and education.

How will computers have changed the world by the year 2000?

At the moment there's an enormous hunger for community, I think that virtual communities are the last chance to bring us back together. We'll see a new wave of optimism created by the synergy of millions of people linked together in cyberspace.

How will you have changed the world by the year 2000?

I hope that by the year 2000 all women will be on the internet as the result of Cyberia's Women-on-line campaign - 50% of customers at Cyberia are female.



Network Computers: The Pros and Cons

The network computer will have two main advantages — it'll be cheap and easy to use. Oracle believes it'll be as cheap as a VCR initially because there'll be no need for a hard drive, specialised video cards or a monster processor. If you need the extra power it'll be just a fibre optic cable away.

But the network computer also face two big obstacles — security and reliability. Will you be willing to commit your personal mail and valuable work to a remote server outside your control? And, if you do, will it really be at your fingertips.

Oracle believes that the NC market will develop alongside the PC market at first. Perhaps it will give people time to get used to the idea. They'll need it.

SINGLE RACE
TOURNAMENT
MULTI PLAYER

GIVE
WAY

SELECT logo

select character

NAME: DEREK "RABID DOG" SIMPKINS
DATE OF BIRTH: 23-06-60
PLACE OF BIRTH: BRAINTREE, ESSEX, ENGLAND
SHOE SIZE: 8
DISTINGUISHING: SHINY TEETH, CHEEKY SMILE, COLOUR COORDINATE
FAVE EXISTENT: JEAN PAUL SAUL

COLOUR

PERSON

England

SEL

SOUND OPTIONS

CD

COMET

Car

MY

AAARRRSE!

SPLIT SCREEN

NETWORK PLAY

SERIAL LINK

PLAYER 1 SELECT

NEXT

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RACING**

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AIV Network\$

Infogrames (0171) 738 8199 • CD

Money is God, trains are king and capitalism rules in this enterprising simulation!



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To run select "A IV Networks" from the CD-ROM's main menu. Please keep this month's CD-ROM in your drive whenever you run this demo.

PC Review is first with the playable demo of A IV Networks. In fact we've managed to get a massive 280Mb worth of gameplay of this top sim on this month's CD-ROM and still have enough space for 29 other excellent programs! The demo features a complete city (one of the ten featured in the real game).

This game is all about enterprise and I'm not talking about the starship! Dwight Owen Barnes (played by James Coburn), president of the A IV corporation has disappeared in his private jet over the Serbian border. Was it an accident? An attempt on his life? The authorities have no information on the crash and the search has become extremely difficult due to the tension in the Balkans and bad weather conditions. The news has made the stock

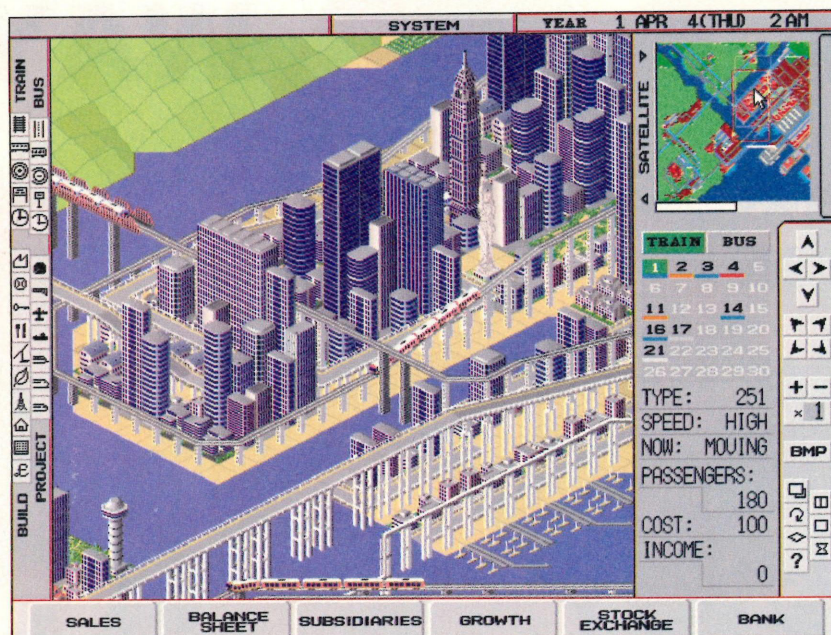
market has slump and Corporation's shares have crashed.

Barnes has left a colossal fortune behind in the form of an industrial empire, a transportation company and holdings in real estate. His conglomerate's income is estimated at four billion dollars. The various companies that make up the A IV group employ more than forty five thousand people located in thirty three countries. But someone

needs to run the show, and with Barnes out of the picture, it's up to you to step into his shoes.

Now the search is on! You play one of the many candidates up for the job. To get your hands on it you'll have to prove yourself as a manager, and an entrepreneur, as well as having a sense of vision.

Your aim is clear, increase turnover and expand the number of businesses under your control. You can create



▲ It's your turn to cheat your way to the top, treading on the fingers of anyone below you. Sort of like Robert Maxwell, apparently.

What's on the Menu..

The A IV Network screen consists of a main map, or a game space, located in the centre of the screen with various menus surrounding it.

The main map represents the theatre of operations. It shows the cities that have signed operating concessions with you. To move around the map use the Satellite sub-menu. This sub-menu is used to zoom in on any part of the main map.

The System Menu

This menu is located at the top of the screen.

Options: used to customise the game to your preferences.

Game Info: This option allows you to see a complete topographical map of the city, a map of the railways and roads, and a report on train and bus schedules

Satellite

This menu located in the upper right corner of the screen displays a reduced-scale image of the complete map. When open it represents a view of half of the complete map and gives you access to the bus and train information.

Bus and Train

Located on the left hand side of the screen this menu consists of commands linked to the construction and management operations of the transportation companies such as rail laying, road construction and schedule management.

Line Const

This menu is used to lay or remove railroad tracks. If you're not satisfied with the direction of the line you're laying, just click on the right mouse button to cancel it.

Purchase

This menu gives you access to a catalogue of 30 different train designs. They are ranked according to speed. To purchase a train open the sub-menu and select a number which is not underlined. Click on a train and then select the number of cars you wish to purchase. Now choose the buy command, it's price will be shown at the bottom of this menu.

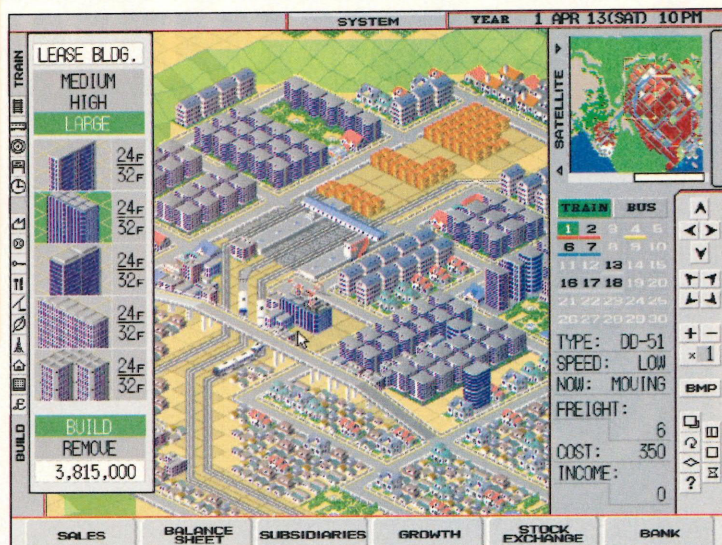
The coverdisk hotline is (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm



▲ **Trains running to time with ticket prices that you can afford, it must be a game.**



▲ **Once you've experienced the joy at seeing your city, you'll want to take over the world.**



▲ **You'll need to buy, sell, lie and lunch for life in this game. Remember that there're no prizes for being second best!**

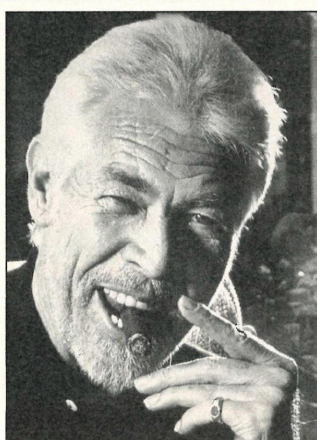
everything from a house to a world media empire. The core business, however, is the rail network. Expand this while buying land and creating new routes. It's no easy ride as disaster is around every corner. Earthquakes will strike, fires will break out, terrorists will attack and all sorts of other misfortunes will bring your shares down and make your investors panic.

A IV networks has more depth than almost any other simulator of its type available. This game could even turn

the most die-hard socialist into a true blue capitalist! Once you've experienced the joy of seeing their trains running to time, your out of town development expanding and your corporation's income double we're sure you'll be hooked! Remember, though, you're just one of several challengers, so don't expect an easy ride.

Requires: 386DX 40Mhz, DOS 5 or higher, 8Mb RAM, SVGA 256 colours, 10Mb of hard disk space, and a Sound Blaster or compatible sound card.

Fact file: James Coburn



We may not know why Coburn decided to star in A IV Networks, but we do know this:

Born: 31st August, 1928, Laurel, Nebraska
Education: Los Angeles City College (acting); USC, Los Angeles (drama)

He came to prominence with the lead in the popular spy spoof "Our Man Flint" and its sequel, "In Like Flint."

A close friend of Bruce Lee, Coburn is an avid student of Eastern martial arts, exercise and philosophy.

CD LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Insert your CD-ROM into the drive and wait for the light to go out.
- 2) Next log on to your CD-ROM drive by typing its drive letter.

From DOS:

3a) Now type either Go.bat for the title screen and Go2.bat for no title screen.

From Windows 3.1:

3b) Click on either Go.bat for the title screen and Go2.bat for no title screen.

From Windows '95:

3c) The CD-ROM will start automatically or use can use explorer to run Go.bat for the title screen and Go2.bat for no title screen.

4) The screen is laid out in boxes, each box contains a screenshot of a demo and its title. Click on the next page and previous page buttons to move between screens. To run a program click on the box you want and press your enter key.

5) A sub-menu will then appear, click on install or run (whichever one is highlighted) to proceed with the demo. Now follow the on-screen instructions. If the program asks you to make a boot disk you are advised to take this option and reboot your system with the boot disc before you run the program.

Windows '95 users only

Some program may install to your hard disc using DOS. You may need to quit to DOS to run them. The easiest way to do this is to close the system down and reboot. When the 'Starting Windows '95' message appears press the F8 key and select the MS DOS option. If after this you find your CD-ROM drive does not respond — DON'T PANIC — as Windows '95 removes drivers it does not like. To un-rem the CD-ROM driver lines type 'edit config.sys' and delete any rems — Windows will clearly mark the lines it has tampered with. If you still have problems you can ring the PC Review disc hotline on (01451) 810788.

NEW POLICY

This is the first month in which PC Review is being published differently. It now comes in two editions: one with a top-class cover CD at the usual price of £4.99, the second without cover CD or high density cover disks for £2.65. The lower price is because of requests you made in our July issue readership survey for a more inexpensive edition. Unfortunately, the magazine retail trade will not allow us to publish three versions of PC Review — so regrettably, we have had to cease publication of the edition with two high density floppy disks. If you've subscribed to the discontinued version and haven't received a letter with a new offer please contact Gaynor Hemmingway at our subscriptions hotline on 01733 898100. Many thanks for your co-operation. We will continue to bring you the most informative and entertaining home PC magazine available.

Has your PC been a victim of crime?

Here are the clues to watch out for...

Was your operating system software delivered with the PC? Microsoft® MS-DOS® and Microsoft® Windows® are the most widely used desktop operating systems in the world. If your PC came with either of these, can you be sure that your software is legal?

To check that you have a fully authentic Microsoft product look for the Certificate of Authenticity - C.O.A. (only operating systems are required to have this) and the End-User Licence Agreement - E.U.L.A. which have to be delivered with MS-DOS and Windows.

If you have these two safeguards you will have: • Technical support. • Rights to warranty. • Right to update to the latest version from the software vendor.

If you don't have the Certificate of Authenticity and the End-User Licence Agreement your system may be illegal, you won't get any of these benefits, and illegal software carries the risk of viruses with the potential catastrophic loss of information.

You can help us with our enquiries. If you think your PC has been a victim of crime, call Microsoft on **0345 300 125** extension 1001 and tell us where you purchased your PC and Microsoft software. We will follow up on the information you give us, in the strictest confidence, and send you details of your consumer rights.

Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks and 'Where do you want to go today?' is a trademark of the Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.



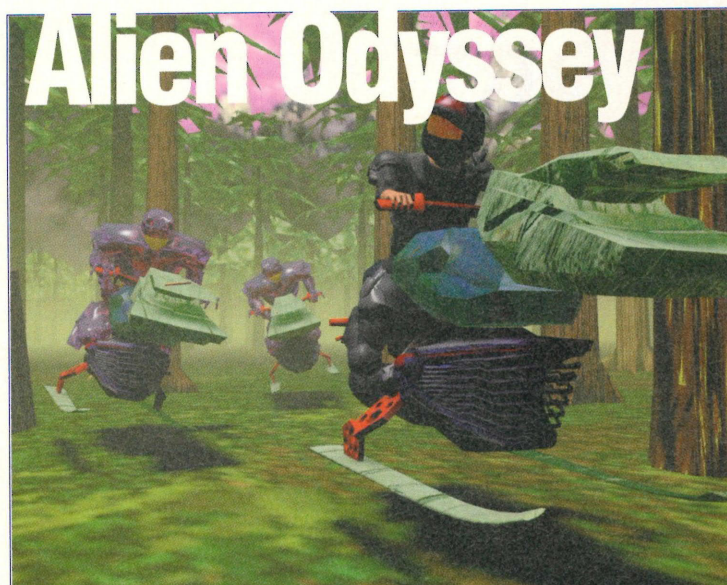
Microsoft®

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?™



CD version only

The coverdisk hotline is (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 3pm-5pm

**Philips (0171) 911 3094 • CD**

To run select "Alien Odyssey" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Alien Odyssey is a graphically stunning game which blends the action of a shoot 'em up with the gameplay normally found in adventure games.

In Alien Odyssey you assume the role of Psaph Abal. Your problems begin when you crash on the planet Betan. Luckily you are befriended by Gaan, one of an oppressed alien race. Together you have to escape from the planet while averting its destruction.

The full game features four unique sections: the forest, the comms bunker, mine and the armoury base. Within the sections there are 120 game locations. The demo on this month's CD-ROM only features the comms bunker. The base is laid out as a series of connected floors, each with rooms for you to explore. The aim is to complete a number of puzzles, while avoiding robots and lizards.

Requires: 486DX2 66Mhz, 8Mb RAM, DOS 5 upwards, VGA 256 colours graphics card, double speed CD-ROM drive, mouse and a soundcard.

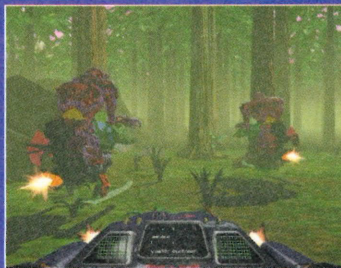
Controls**Control**

Up Cursor
Shift + Up Cursor
Z + Up Cursor
Down Cursor
Z + Down Cursor
Left Cursor
Right Cursor
ALT + Left Cursor
ALT + Right Cursor
X
Z
Spacebar

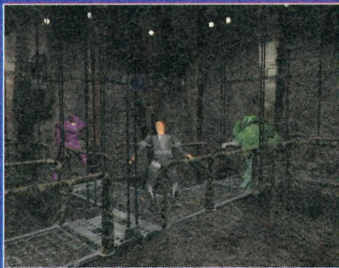
Action

Walk Forward
Run Forward
Creep Forward
Walk Forward
Creep Forward
Turn Left
Turn Right
Side Step Left
Side Step Right
Jump
1. Crouch
2. Collect Item
Activate Lift

Racing through trees on speeder bikes, hey? Return Of The Jedi has a lot to answer for. ▼



Looks like our balding hero needs a help with his bridge, he should ask Omar Sharif. ▼



Hexen

GT Interactive (0171) 258 3791 • CD

▲ **If you see one of these shoot it. If it doesn't die, shoot it again. Repeat to fade.**



▲ **Ooh, that looks nasty. Here, let me rub in some of this hand lotion. There, there. Better now?**

To run select "Hexen" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

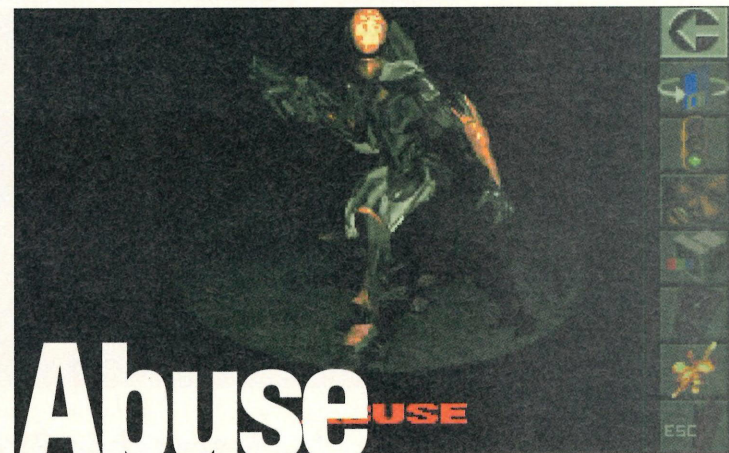
It's here and it's the Next Big Thing. It's Hexen, the sequel to Raven / id's smash hit Doom-style fantasy hack 'n' slash-fest Heretic. Hexen gives you the choice of characters to play, a multitude of weapons to wield and spells to cast, and more ugly monsters than you could shake a big sword at.

You can configure your own controls by typing SETUP at the DOS prompt in the Hexen directory, or use the default keys which are: cursor keys = move / turn; Ctrl = fire weapon / spell; [,] = choose potion or spell to cast; Enter = cast spell / use potion. Holding down Shift with a cursor key will make you run, while holding down Alt and left or right cursor allows you to "slide".

Take your pick of the Warrior, Cleric or Mage characters — each has its own strengths and weaknesses: the Warrior is good for a bit of hand to hand action, while the mage is better at throwing magic around at long distance, and the cleric is reasonably good at both.

The levels are all huge and fiendishly designed, and it's often necessary to return to earlier levels in order to advance to the next. This demo features four complete levels, so no excuses not to dive into the next best thing since Doom!

Requires: 486DX2/66, 8Mb RAM, most major sound cards



Abuse

Gaming Central (01624) 861233 • CD

To run select "Abuse" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

A platform game in the Turricon mould, Abuse has you running around alien-infested tunnels trying desperately to avoid getting toasted long enough to save the world (no surprises there). Use the mouse to aim your gun, left mouse button to fire and right to select a different weapon. You move about with the left and right arrows, jump with the up arrow and activate switches and so forth with the down arrow. There's more than enough heavy weaponry to keep those

aliens at bay if you're quick enough on the trigger, so clamp on that armour and get blazin'.

Requires: 486SX, VGA, 4Mb RAM, most major sound cards.



TRANSPORT TYCOON DELUXE

**Attention Control Freaks:
World Domination Can be Yours**



“...Better than Sim City 2000” PC ZONE

A game that will satisfy the megalomaniac in everyone

New Features in Transport Tycoon Deluxe:

- Four Game “Climates” with a limitless number of gameplay environments
- Network Play ● New Vehicles ● Company Buy-Outs

PC FORMAT 90% • PC HOME 93% • PC GAMES 93% • PC GAMER 91%

REVIEW SCORES FOR TRANSPORT TYCOON

FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES WITH CD-ROM

MICROPROSE

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE - MICROPROSE WORLD WIDE WEB SITE: <http://www.microprose.com>

Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom

Origin Systems (01753) 549442

To run select Wing Commander IV from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Join an all star cast including Mark Hamill (Star Wars), Malcolm McDowell (Star Trek: Generations, A Clockwork Orange) and Tom Wilson (Back to the Future) in the sequel to one of the best games ever for the PC.

Wing Commander IV sets a new benchmark for interactive movies, instead of being filmed against blue backgrounds, 38 sets were especially built. In the full game you can expect to find hours of interactive live-action video and a fully-digitised soundtrack.

The story is by Terry Borst and Frank DePalma who also wrote Wing Commander III. You play the part of Christopher Blair (Mark Hamill), who is called out of retirement to help combat the Civil war which has broken out in the Border Worlds. All is not as it seems and it soon becomes unclear who to trust. You must be successful in your mission; failure will result in the break-up of the Confederation!

After putting \$9 million into the project Origin Systems are clearly expecting Wing Commander IV to take the number one spot. Play the demo on this month's CD-ROM and you'll soon see that this game looks as good as it plays. If you're only going to buy one game this Christmas then look no further, but remember Wing Commander IV is a monster game and you'll need a monster PC to play it.

Requires: Pentium, quad speed CD-ROM, 8Mb RAM, SVGA, joystick and all major sound cards.



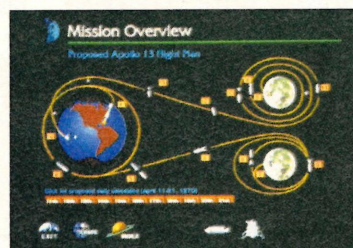
APOLLO 13

Screen Multimedia (01923) 858043

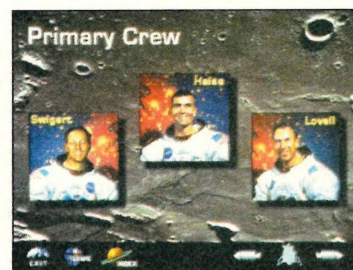
To run select Apollo 13 from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This piece of multimedia tells the dramatic story leading up to and after those fatal words, 'Houston we have a problem.' The experience of this fatal space mission is brought to life through computer reconstructions, original photographs, newspaper articles, exclusive interviews and rare NASA archive material. The full program contains over 70 minutes of video and 20 minutes of audio. In this demo you get to explore the events of the explosion through a simple point and click interface. So don your space suit and prepare for take off. And you don't even have to worry about having too-close an encounter with Tom Hanks.

Requires: 386DX 33MHz, Windows 3.1 upwards, 8 Mb RAM, SVGA, any sound-card and a dual speed CD-ROM drive.



▲ Now don't get lost, Tom.



▲ Wonder if they've seen the film?

SU-27 Flanker

Mindscape (01444) 246333

To run select SU-27 from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Fly Russia's latest and most deadly fighter in Mindscape's top fight simulator. After playing this game Anatoly Kvotchur, Russia's top test pilot, claimed that, "This is the closest you'll get without flying the SU-27."

The demo is a self-running demonstration of a previous mission. You can either watch the entire mission or interact with it and take control. If you choose to fly, be aware that in this demo you only get 10 minutes of fuel, so don't get too carried away. If your aircraft should be destroyed the program will continue running allowing you to view the other missions.



▲ Look! It goes real fast and you can preserve international communism with it! Well, you could have done a couple of years ago.

Keys

If you press the Esc key while the demo is in progress, a message will appear asking you to press:

Esc — to resume the demo

C — to continue flying and fighting on your own (see Program Controls for keys)

X — to bail out

To quit the demo at any time use ALT+Q. To pause the demo hit the S key.

Flight control keys

Control	Joystick enabled	Joystick disabled
Down Arrow	Trim up	Nose up
Up Arrow	Trim down	Nose down
Left Arrow	Trim left	Bank left
Right Arrow	Trim right	Bank right

Z Rudder left (in flight), left turn (taxi mode)

X Rudder right (in flight), right turn (taxi mode)

Navigation keys

CapsLock	select specific navigation submode
Tilde (~)	select next waypoint or airfield
A	toggle autopilot
H	toggle altitude stabilisation

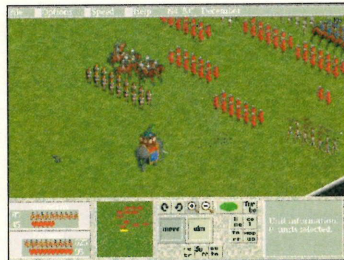
View selection

F1	Cockpit View
F2	Outside View (press repeatedly to cycle through available aircrafts)
F3	Tower View
F4	Ground View (cycle through available SAMs)
F5	Outside+ View; similar to Outside View. If a missile or bomb is released, the view switches to it.
F6	Chase View
F7	Chase+ View; similar to Chase View. If a missile or bomb is released, the view switches to it.
F8	Ship View (cycle through available ship)
NumLock	Show MY aircraft

You can control the zoom for external views by using the * key on the keypad to zoom in and the / key on the keypad to zoom out.

Requires: 386DX, 8Mb RAM, DOS 5 upwards, SVGA and a Sound Blaster or compatible.

Caesar 2



Sierra (01734) 303322

To run select Caesar 2 from the CD-ROM's main menu.

In the second of this month's city simulators we take you back to Roman times. In Caesar 2 you play the Governor of a small Roman Province. Your task is to build the capital city. In addition you're in charge of defence and the armies. If you achieve success in your province you will be promoted. When you have conquered enough provinces, you will then receive the ultimate glory of being crowned Caesar — Emperor of Rome.

Requires: 386DX 33, 8Mb RAM, SVGA and a mouse.



The Rules of the Empire

Roads and Plazas

These form links between:

Forums and Housing — for tax collection

Business and Housing — for employment

Markets and Housing — for customers

Praefectures and Structures — for fire prevention

In order for a structure to gain benefit from a road they must be within two squares of it.

Water

Reservoirs — these supply water to people in a small radius and pipe access (via an underground network) in a larger radius. A reservoir only has water when it is adjacent to a river or is linked to an aqueduct.

Fountains — Most of your houses will get their water from a fountain placed within range of a reservoir.

Wells — These can be used to create a water supply within a small area.

Education

Grammaticus is the school for young children, Rhetor is for older students, build these near housing. The library affects housing across the entire city so build enough to maintain a high library-to-population ratio.



Tyrian

Epic MegaGames (01767) 260903

To run select Tyrian from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Tyrian is set in the year 20,031 and you play a fighter pilot who can only achieve galactic peace by blasting everything in sight. This is a good old fast and furious arcade shoot 'em up. The graphics may be old-fashioned 2D, but they are still exquisite. It's also crammed with plenty of traditional arcade blasting action, so be warned it's totally addictive!

Requires: 386DX 33Mhz, 4Mb RAM, 10 Mb of hard disk space, VGA, Sound Blaster compatible sound card or Gravis Ultrasound, or General MIDI MPU-401 compatible sound card (Roland Sound Canvas, RAP-10, MT-32) and mouse.



A Christmas Story

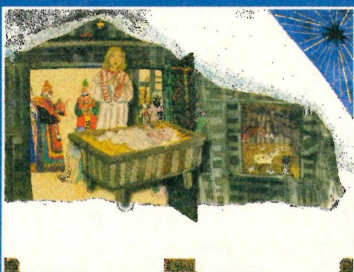
Oxford University Press (01865) 267815

To run select A Christmas Story from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Christmas is coming. If you're stuck for present ideas then take a look at this magical piece of multimedia.

As in A Fish Who Could Wish, Oxford University Press has teamed up with Glasgow based Inner Working to bring a storybook to the PC. Brian Wildsmith's beautiful illustrations are accompanied by the voice of Martin Jarvis. Each screen provides a great variety of interactive elements for you to discover, making this charming tale an ideal present for children of all ages.

Requires: 486SX, 33Mhz, 4Mb, Double Speed CD-ROM, DOS 5 upwards and Windows 3.1 upwards.



Viacom (0181) 7419 333

To run select Zoop from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Zoop is a great game, in fact it's a real killer... of time that is. Zoop is simply one of the most addictive games in the history of PC entertainment. Changing the colour of different shapes may not sound like an exciting waste of time, but once you start playing this demo you'll be hooked for life. After playing this demo we're sure that you'll be giving Viacom a ring and demanding your copy!

Requires: 486PC, DOS 5+, 550Kb base memory, 8Mb RAM, and SVGA.

Keys

Press Control key to fire.

Use cursor keys to change direction.

**MAKE SURE THE MULTIMEDIA PC
YOU BUY THIS CHRISTMAS
IS THE ONE YOU'LL STILL WANT
NEXT CHRISTMAS.**



APRICOT MS540 FROM £1349

This is the Apricot MS540, an all new multimedia PC designed expressly for the home.

It comes with a superb collection of software titles to help you explore its remarkable performance to the full, straight out of the box.

But even without the software, we're confident you'd choose this computer over its rivals, because we designed the MS540 to be not just the most advanced PC you can buy today, but to maintain its technological advantages for longer.

The key is an all-new motherboard which we designed and built ourselves to be a marvel of upgradeability. Memory, video memory, cache memory and processors



have all been designed to accept simple plug-in upgrades. So as your needs grow, so can your system.

And for specialised components, we have sourced only the best: a quad-speed CD-ROM from Sony, SoundBlaster market-leading sound technology from Creative Labs. Plus 20-watt speakers that wouldn't shame a good hi-fi.

What this all adds up to is a system that exudes quality and reliability, easily seen in the way it performs and the way it's built. (Not so surprising when you consider that Apricot Computers is part of the worldwide Mitsubishi group.)

And when you see the way it looks, you'll realise this is the first PC that's really fit for your home. But don't take our word for it, come and judge for yourself.



Free: Hutchinson Multimedia Encyclopedia, 3D Atlas, Magic Carpet, Wing Commander III, Hi Octane, WordPerfect Works, Lotus Organizer, Audition.

- Intel 75, 100 or 133MHz Pentium® processors • Up to 128Mb EDO RAM
- Intel Triton chipset • Cirrus Logic Alpine GD5434 graphics accelerator with 1Mb DRAM on 100 & 133MHz models • PCI & ISA expansion bus with 4 free slots (2 x PCI) • 850 to 1.2Gb HDD • Quad-speed Sony CD-ROM
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Vibra 16 audio
- External 20-watt speakers • Power-saving standby mode with 2-second recovery

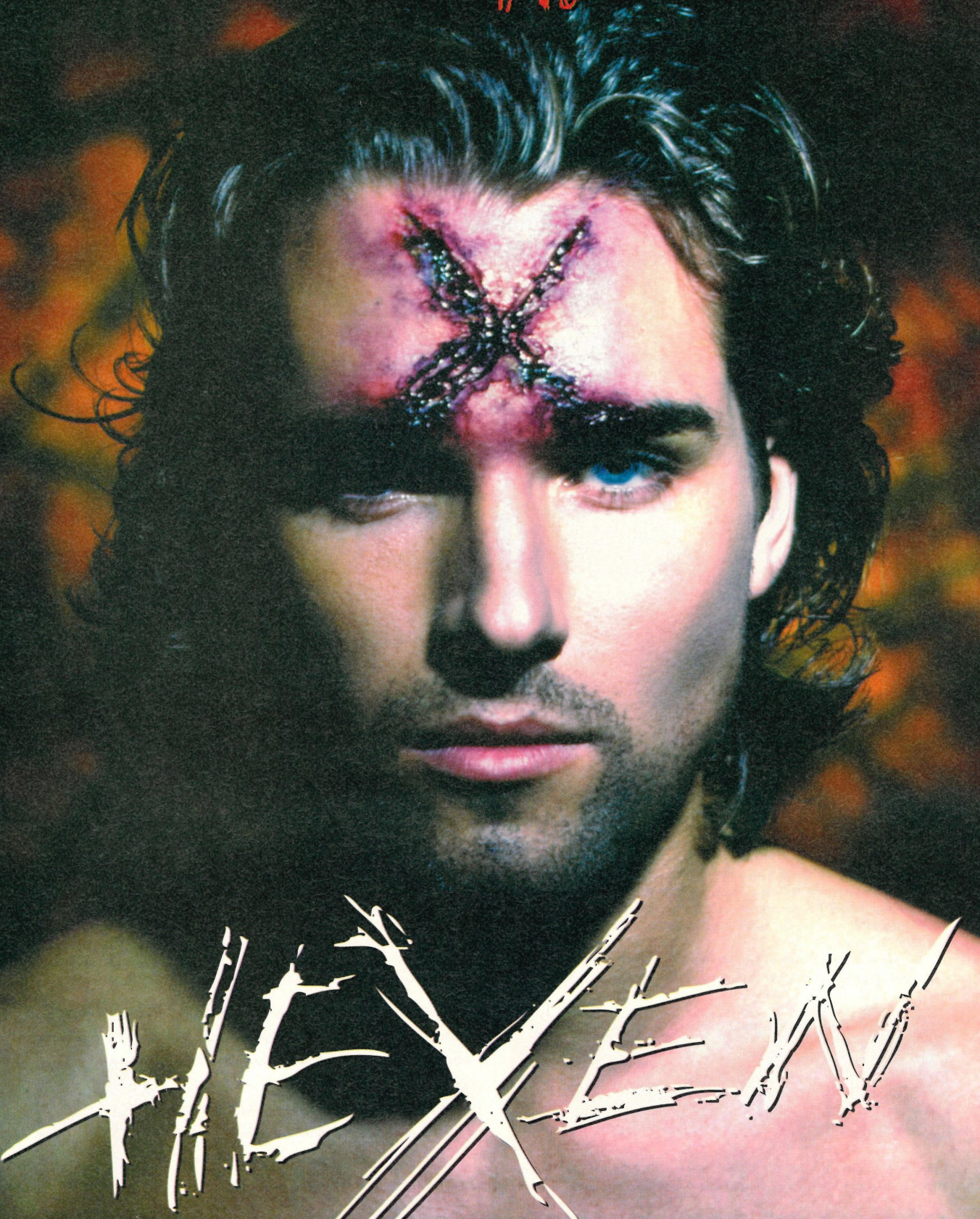


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BEYOND ANY 3D GAME EVER CREATED.



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Digital Calenders

Digital Calenders (01207) 270437 • CD



To run select "Digital Calenders" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This program offers you a colourful way of brightening up your desktop and (more usefully) your very own on-line diary. Clicking on the dates on the current and next month calenders will take you to a diary page. Clicking on 1995 will take you to the full year's diary, click on any date from August

and you will access a diary page. To quit the program press the alt and F4 keys. Requires: 386PC, VGA and Windows 3.1 upwards.

Bluebook

JGS (01737) 844 862 • CD

To run select "BlueBook" from the CD-ROM's main menu. To run type Bluebook.

Bluebook is a simple database which can also be used as a personnel information manager (diary/ToDo lists/contacts), a librarian retrieval system and a DOS menu/launcher. This database is very easy to use. It's ability to run any DOS program or batch file from each record means data can be found quickly and easily.

Large databases can be constructed from the version of Bluebook on this month's cover disc. For more advanced features will have to register your copy. Requires: 386PC, 4Mb RAM, VGA and a mouse.



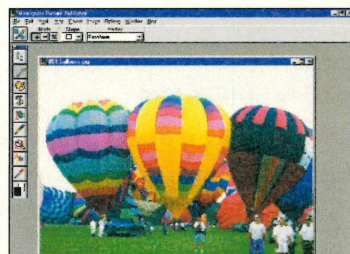
Picture Publisher 5.0

Micrografx (01256) 53339 • CD only

To run select "Picture Publisher" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This is a demo version of one of the best picture manipulation programs available. As well as the usual drawing, shape and fill tools, you can apply dozens of special filters to your pictures - artistic effects such as Charcoal or Oil Painting, distortions like Twist or Motion Blur, or even add textures - to produce impressively high-quality results. This is a full version of the package, but you may only use it for 30 days before it expires.

Requires: 486DX, 4Mb, Windows 3.1



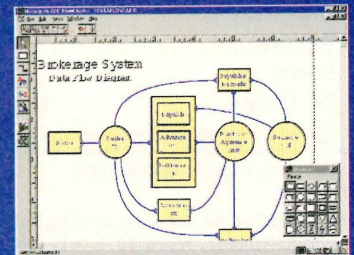
ABC Flowcharter

Micrografx (01256) 53339 • CD only

To run select "ABC FlowCharter" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

A flowchart, for those among you who never studied programming, is a diagram that explains, step by step, the actions involved in a particular operation: ABC flowcharter is designed to help you construct flowcharts quickly and easily.

Requires: 486DX, 4Mb, Windows 3.1



Squarez

BOZZ Software (01253) 404075 • CD

To run select 'Squarez' from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This is an innovative puzzle game, which is simple yet addictive. The aim is to clear all the coloured squares on the board before your time runs out. This version comes with fifty boards to help you while away those spare work hours.

Requires: 286PC, 512K RAM, and DOS 3.3 upwards.

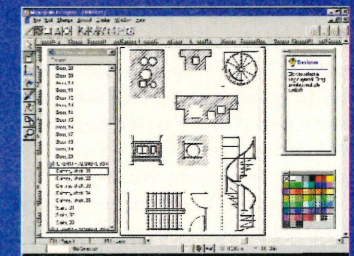
Designer 4.1

Micrografx (01256) 53339 • CD only

To run select "Designer 4.1" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Micrografx Designer 4.1 TE is a fully-featured structured drawing package, capable of producing professional-quality presentations and illustrations, and even highly detailed technical diagrams. The usual draw, shape and fill tools occupy the left hand side of the screen, and clicking on each of these brings up a further set of tools along the top of the screen. The on-line help is extremely detailed, but for short hints you can enable the Hint Line from the Display menu, or simply point to a particular button for a quick description of its function. This version will work for 30 days.

Requires: 486DX, 8Mb, Windows 3.1



OfficeBlox

Alphablox (01628) 23458 • CD

To run select "OfficeBlox" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Try out the full version of this suite of applications (reviewed last issue) for one month. Officeblox provides you with several integrated programs to help simplify your life; ToolBlox is a control panel you can configure to launch your most frequently-used applications; CalcBlox is a calculator with built-in spreadsheet; NoteBlox is a notepad, and ListBlox is a kind of database/spreadsheet thing. Check out the on-line help for more details.

Requires: Any PC running Windows 95



- Fade Out
- Gain Adjust ... G
- Mute ...
- Equalize ... E
- Frequency Analysis ... F
- Mix ...
- Crossfade ... X
- Reverse ...
- Invert ...
- DC Offset ... D
- Time Compress/Expand ... C

▲ There are loads of possible effects.

For powerful yet easy to use digital music editing, WaveSE is just the biz. And there's a full version on this month's cover CD.

WAVESE

What better way to while away winter nights than making sweet music with your PC. Try WaveSE on this month's cover CD, worth £79!

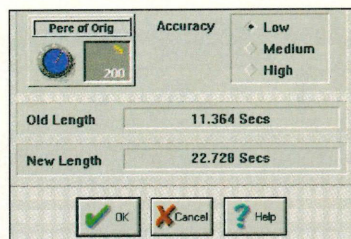
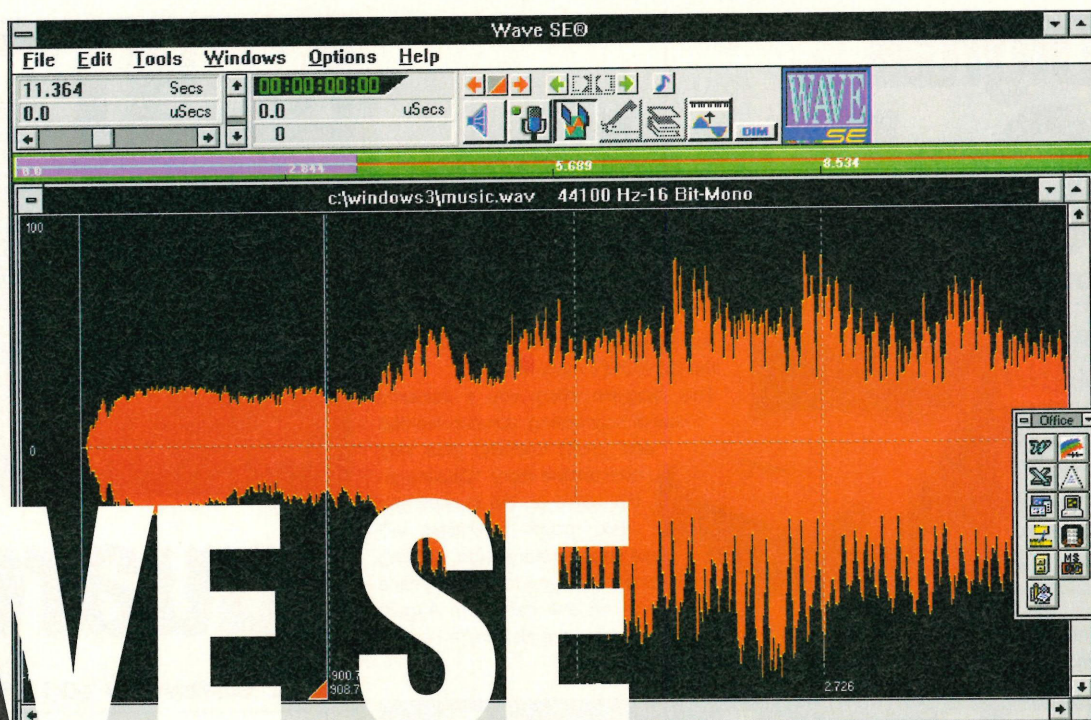
Install by selecting "WAVE SE" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Wave SE is a comprehensive, fully featured, sound file editor for Windows. With it you can take tunes, or digital music, in the form of WAV files, edit them and apply numerous effects. The program's also powerful enough to be used professionally.

Once Wave SE is loaded you'll see the screen above. To load a WAV file (you'll find some in your Windows directory) simply click on the FILE menu and select Open. There are also two longer WAV files on this month's cover CD in the Monopoly/Sounds directory.

Once loaded, the middle part of the screen will fill with a mass of vertical lines of different lengths. This is the digital data of the WAV shown in graphical form. Each line from left to right represents a tiny part of the note. To play the tune click on the speaker icon at the top of the screen, roughly half way across. For details of the other icons along the top see the panel bottom right.

Having loaded a WAV file into WaveSE you can then then apply various digital effects to it. The Edit and Tools menu contain a wide range of features, from fading in and out a track, to reversing or mixing it with other tracks (the program can have up to four Wav files loaded at once), to stretching a tune or note out over a period of time. The equalise option brings up a dialog box giving you various filters for reducing background noise as well as other commonly used tools. You can find a a full breakdown of these in the panel on the left.



▲ Your tunes can be stretched or reduced in length. Just grab the on-screen knob and turn it to change the length.

The effects can either be applied to the entire track or just a part of it, useful for fading in the start and then fading out the end. To select part of a sound file drag the mouse over the part you want to work on. If you hit play you'll hear just this part. That's it for this month, there'll be more tutorials covering the program over the next couple of months, while on next month's CD there'll also be a collection of sample music files you use with WaveSE.

3D-Ware Tutorial

Watch out for the comprehensive 3D-Ware tutorial starting next month.

The Equaliser

The Equalise option under the Tools menu allows you to apply a range of effects to your sound files.

10K LOW PASS	Helps to get rid of very high frequency noise.
1K HIGH PASS	Cuts frequencies below 1K, to dampen low background rumble.
2K LOW PASS FILTER	A high frequency cut.
5K LOW PASS FILTER	A high frequency hiss cutter.
60HZ HIGH PASS	Cuts very low frequencies.
60HZ NOTCH FILTER, HUM KILLER	Common ground hum usually resides in this area.
AM RADIO	Boosted mids and cut highs and lows simulate the narrow AM bandwidth.
BASS BOOST	Boosts your low end. Good for beefing up wimpy musical tracks.
BASS CUT	Dampens the low end.
HIGH END SHELVE BOOST	Boost your extreme high end for a crisper sound.
MID BOOST	Boosts your mid-range frequencies.
MID CUT	Dampens mids and shows off your high and low end sound.
NEWS ROOM	Simulate the 30's radio news reporter sound.
POWER Q	A high and low end boost commonly used to sweeten musical tracks.
TREBLE BOOST	Brighten up dull tracks.
TREBLE CUT	Cuts out high end tinniness.



The Play Icon



The Record Icon



The Select Icon



The Draw Icon



The Previous View Icon



The Transfer To Sampler Icon



The Left Tab Icon



The Marker Icon



The Right Tab Icon



The Go To Loop Start Icon



The Loop Start Icon



The Loop End Icon

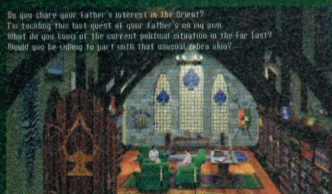
Upgrade

If you enjoy using Wave SE you'll probably want to upgrade to its big brother, Wave SE II. This normally sells for £149, but for a limited period and as a special offer to PC Review readers Et Cetera is offering it for the knock down price of £29! For further details call Et Cetera on 01706 228039.

Ripley's Believe It or Not! THE RIDDLE OF MASTER LU



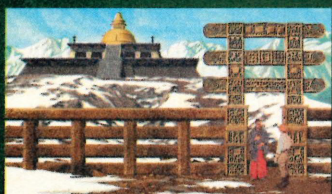
An original story based upon a baffling, true-life mystery of the ancient world.



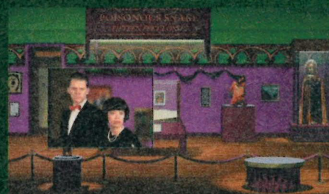
An involving and evolving true-life storyline for a totally non-linear gaming experience.



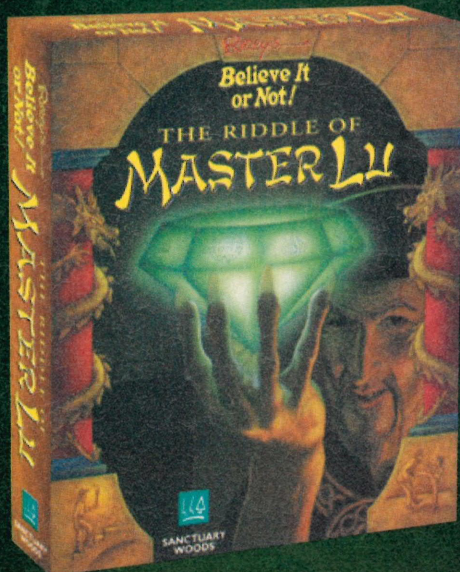
Rational, real-world puzzle-solving offers obstacles with achievable goals for all levels of expertise.



Explore over 200 authentic and historically accurate environments including Peiping, Easter Island and a lost city in the Andes.



Use of unique cinematic techniques depicting character emotions give this graphic adventure its own distinctive visual style.



The year is 1936. The planet is teetering on the brink of a world war. A talisman of enormous power, the imperial seal of the First Emperor of China, could tip the balance of power for the one who possesses it.

Players take on the role of Robert Ripley, adventurer, world traveller, collector of the strange and bizarre, real-life creator of the Believe It Or Not! Odditoriums. With your constant companion Mei Chen, mistress of the martial arts, you must prevent the seal from falling into the hands of a ruthless enemy. Along the way, you must also acquire new attractions to keep your Odditorium in New York in business, as the museum's revenue funds your globe-trotting adventures.

"The scenery and player environment is nothing less than awesome." PC Zone

"Sweeping animations and carefully conceived close-ups are used to give the game a sense of pace and action." PC Zone

AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM.



SANCTUARY
WOODS

US GOLD

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Baryon

The Game Factory (001 203) 7768608 • e-mail: peter@gamefactory.com • CD only

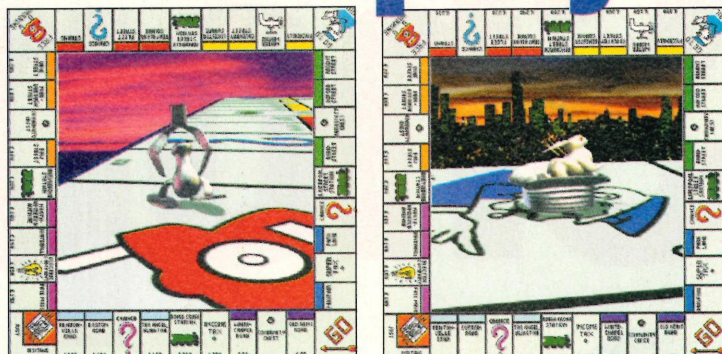
To run select "Baryon" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This game is absolutely nothing like Raiden, oh no, definitely not. Well, a bit. Okay, it's pretty much identical to Raiden – a top-down shoot 'em up for one or two players. Once you've run setup to configure your sound card and chosen the control method, just get in there and keep hitting the fire button, and don't stop hitting it until the game is finished (or you're dead). It's not easy at all, so make sure you pick up the power-ups that appear every once in a while to boost your weapons or give you a shield.

Requires: 386SX, 4Mb RAM, VGA.



Monopoly



Hasbro (0181) 5691234 • CD only

To run select "Monopoly" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Pamper your eyeballs with this pretty rolling demo of Westwood's upcoming boardgame bonanza, featuring a few of the in-game animations to whet your appetite.

Requires: Any PC running Windows.

Profits Warning

The Games Room (01924) 267776 • CD

To run select Profits Warning from the CD-ROM's main menu.

This demo allows you to buy and sell shares over a period of one year. Here's a quick guide to get you started:

1 Go to the Portfolio window.

This screen shows you how your shares are performing. At the moment you don't own any shares, so you won't have any profit or loss.

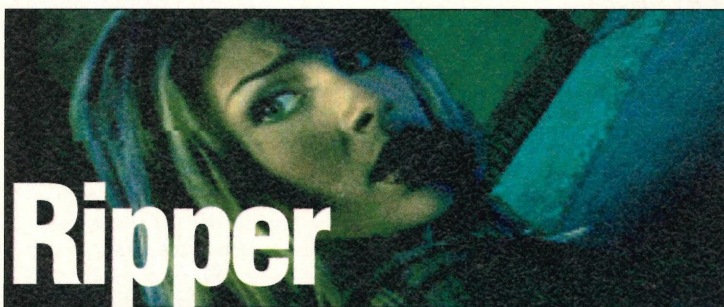
2 Buy the shares

Click on the index button, which takes you into the make purchase screen. This shows you the current price of all the shares in the game. To buy shares click on the buy button and enter the amount of shares (in cash) you want.

3 Ring the Broker

You only purchase shares when you ring the broker. To do this click on Ring the Broker and then on done. Remember that you'll have to pay a broker's fee, so the price of the shares will have to rise before you make a profit.

Requires: 486PC, Windows 3.1 upwards and a VGA display.

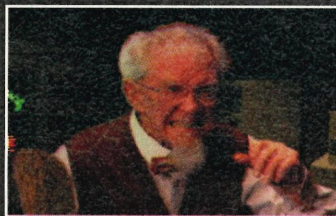
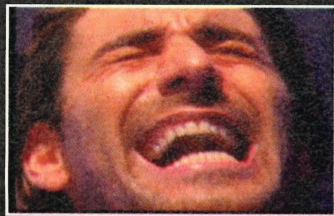


GameTek (01753) 553445 • CD only

To run select "Ripper" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Christopher Walken and Burgess Meredith star in this rolling demo; the game will be a Full Motion Video extravaganza, and this is just a sneak preview of the upcoming action.

Requires: 486DX2/66, 8MB RAM, most major sound cards.



Threat

The Game Factory (001 203) 7768608 • e-mail: peter@gamefactory.com • CD only

To run select "Threat" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

Threat is an action game in the same vein as Alien Breed: a top-down blast'em-up involving big guns and nasty alien meanies. You can have up to three players on the same machine, too – so invite your friends round and have a crazy old time cleansing the universe of those evil mutant hordes. Beware that you can only see the alien if it is in your line of sight – so take care when exploring, they like to lurk!

As you progress through the game, you collect credits that can be exchanged at the shop for better weapons or to improve your health; before you enter each level you are given the choice to enter the shop and buy your chosen weapon of mass destruction.

Requires: 386SX, 4Mb RAM, Sound Blaster or compatible.



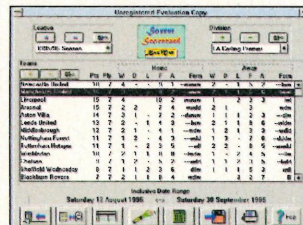
Soccer Scorecard

KazMax, 3 Yorkshire Place, Warfield Bracknell, Berkshire, RG42 3XE • CD only

To run select "Soccer Scorecard" from the CD-ROM's main menu.

We ran an old version of this football database in our October issue and so many people registered that KazMax gave us an updated version. For those of you who didn't buy the October issue (and if not why not?), Soccer Scorecard allows you manage information relating to league results and can help you do the pools.

Requires: 386PC, 4Mb RAM, and Windows 3.1



Shareware Shopping

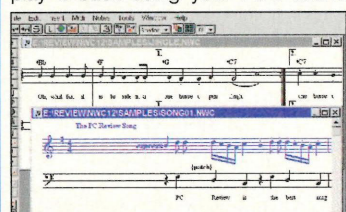


Charles Hathaway battles on in his search to bring you the best in shareware. If you like what you see, load our cover CD and try 'em out.

Noteworthy

Music has never been my strong point. I can even remember being offered sixpence when I was child if I'd stop trying to sing along to the radio on a long car journey. On the other hand I've always wanted to experiment and try my hand at composing. Not a symphony you understand, just a little tune.

Noteworthy for Windows is the first score creator and song writing tool I've ever really understood. You can create a complete orchestral score or a simple two staff piano arrangement and play it back using your PC's sound



▲ **Makin' music with Noteworthy.**

card. If you've got a MIDI capable card — like most 16-bit sound cards you can even specify different instruments.

Within five minutes of installing Noteworthy, I'd composed a three bar tune. The left and right mouse buttons are used to add and delete notes and other parts of the score, making it very easy to use. You can also add various play styles and even print out the score for posterity. Well worth meddling with if you're interested in how it all works.

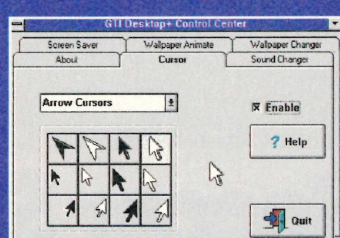
Evaluation versions from:
Goodman International (01782) 335650 ● Requirements: Any 4Mb PC running Windows plus sound card ● Price: £39

"Makes music composition much more accessible and fun."
PC REVIEW RATING 7

GTI Desktop

GTI Desktop 1.2 is a set of integrated desktop utilities for Windows. It includes screen savers, a screen saver randomiser, animated wallpaper, random wallpaper changer, custom cursors and a random startup/exit sound changer. All of these features are controlled through a simple utility.

Included in GTI Desktop is Slide Show, a screen saver that allows you to turn your favourite bitmap into a unique personal screen saver. Also included is Classic Planes, a screen saver that features photorealistic planes and can be used as an animated wallpaper. If you already have a large collection of Windows standard *.SCR screen savers there's no need to throw them away because GTI Desktop now supports them too.

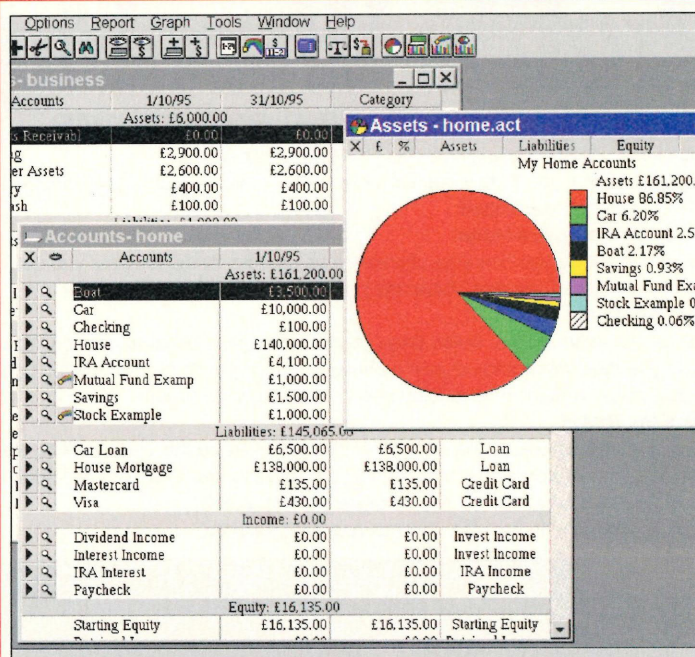


▲ **All the GTI Desktop features can be accessed and tested from this control centre.**

Evaluation versions from: Invicta Shareware. Contact Invicta on (0181) 302 6213 Requirements: Any 386 PC or better running Windows ● Price: £20

"Makes your PC a lot more appealing."

PC REVIEW RATING 5



Money Smith 95

Money Smith 95 is a shareware home accounts program that rivals its commercial competitors, Quicken and Microsoft Money. If you want to do a little more than just keep track of your cheques, but don't need a full-blown accounting system, Money Smith might be just what you're looking for.

Its user interface make it pretty simple to understand and use, often a failing with accountancy type programs. A graphical toolbar and intuitive interactive interface combine to give you double entry accounting in real time. Money Smith reports and graphs feature hot spots that let you jump instantly to the most commonly used functions. It is also packed with features including an integrated financial calculator for loans, investment tracking, budgeting, cheque printing, account

▲ **Money Smith in action — actually makes accounting fun.**

category grouping, international currency support and automatic recurring transactions. The latest version has new interactive reports and historical graphs to let small business owners track accounts easily.

This version of Money Smith 95 only runs under the Windows 95 or Windows NT, but Windows 3.1 users will be pleased to know a 16-bit version is available from the suppliers — call them for details.

Evaluation versions from: Goodman International (01782) 335650 ● Requirements: Any PC running Windows 95 ● Price: £29.95

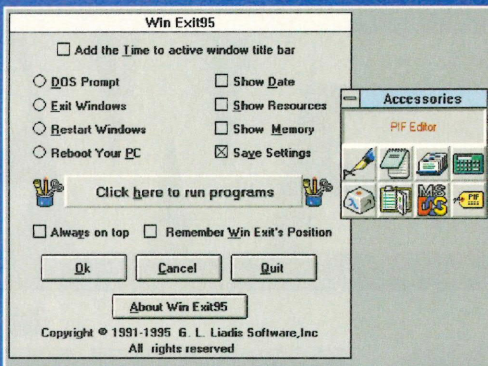
"If nothing else it makes your overdraft look a lot prettier."

PC REVIEW RATING 6

Win Exit 5.0

In the world of utilities, few programs can be as blissfully simple as Win Exit 5.0. All it does is ensure a nice speedy exit from Windows whenever you need it.

Now I know you can quit Windows with an Alt-F4 — you can even trundle up to the menu and look for Exit. It's not hard. But what if you want to restart Windows? Or reboot your PC and end up back where you started. Now you've got to quit to DOS, then reboot, then type "WIN" and so on. If you find yourself regularly returning to DOS to run a particular program or a game, you'll find Win Exit useful.



▲ Win Exit in action.

Evaluation versions from: Ensign (0181) 778 2871 ● Requires: Any PC running Windows ● Price: £10

"Why? Count the number of times a day you quit Windows...."

PC REVIEW RATING

7



Roadhog

I love racing games but they do tend to be a bit on the "samey" side. Black and white chequered flag, starting grid, half a dozen cars and a view of the back of your head as you wait for the green light. Sound familiar? It could be any one of

a dozen popular titles, but if you're waiting for me to say this one's different, forget it! It isn't but happily it's none the worse for that.

The game can be played with a joystick, control pad or keyboard and you can alter the keys to suit yourself. The game sets itself for the correct speed by measuring your system performance and sound card detection is also straightforward.

The first screen lets you choose which race you want to take part in and you're whisked straight to the starting grid for some wheel-wobblin' action. The track editor lets you alter each track, but not in the way you'd expect. Instead you alter the steep-



▲ The different tracks make Roadhogs a game to look out for.

ness of the hills, width of the road and various other parameters.

This is a fairly standard racing car game but the action is smooth, the car very responsive and the wide range of scenery and opponents makes it extremely enjoyable.

Evaluation versions from: Ensign on (0181) 778 2871 ● Requirements: Any PC, 40 MHz 386 or better, 2 Mb RAM ● Price: £25

"Non-stop roaring road action."

PC REVIEW RATING

7

CD-ROM/Cover disk help

Our helpline service is open to everyone who has a PC Review Cover CD or High Density Disks - whether or not you've bought the CD edition or have purchased the edition with no coverdisks and have sent off for the CD or two High Density disks separately (for details of how to use this offer see page 27 of this issue).

The PC Review cover disks and CD-ROM discs are rigorously checked and scanned for all known viruses at each stage during their production. However, cover disks and cover CDs are used at the reader's own risk. PC Review can therefore accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by the use of our disks or CD-ROMs. If circumstances dictate

after that then ring our cover disk hotline on (01451) 810788, between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm weekdays.

Help! My CD-ROM/Cover disk is damaged...

Out of the thousands of cover disks and CD-ROM discs we duplicate every month, a very small number may get damaged during

01451 810788

that we are unable to supply the stated program, we will endeavour to provide alternative software. Sorry, but PC Review will not be held responsible for content changes.

Help! My CD-ROM/Cover disk isn't working. . .

If only some of the programs on the disc crash or will not load then you probably have a memory problem, in this case read the 'Before you start: sort out those nasty memory problems' section on page 14 of this very issue. If you are still completely stuck

transit. If you think your cover disk or CD-ROM disc may be faulty, we'll replace it. Just pop the cover disk or CD-ROM disc in a jiffy bag with a suitably sized, self-addressed envelope and postage to the value of 28p (55p from overseas) and the form below (filled in), and send the package to the following address: DiskXpress, Unit 7, Willow Court, Bourton Industrial Park, Bourton-on-the-water, Gloucestershire GL54 2HQ.

Please DO NOT send the cover disk or CD-ROM disc back to the PC Review editorial office — we don't hold stocks of spares.

LOADING YOUR CD-ROM/DISK

CD-ROM:

To run this month's Shareware select the program from the CD ROM's main menu using your cursor keys and then press the Enter key.

Disk:

If you've sent off for your High Densities.... At the DOS prompt type a:pcr and press the return key. Now follow the on-screen instructions.

Name

Address

.....

The cover disk/CD-ROM disc (delete as applicable) on my copy of PC Review was damaged. Please send me a replacement — I enclose return postage to the value of 28p (55p overseas) and the original disk/disc.



NEWS

Manga movies come to the PC

Sex, violence and cyberpunk. It's no wonder that Anime is popular. Now that Manga is releasing 20 of its movies on VideoCD, you'll be able to watch them on your PC.

Thanks to an exclusive signed deal between UK-based Manga Entertainment Ltd and VideoCD publisher CD Vision, PC owning fans of Japanese Anime movies are in for a treat. CD Vision has signed the right to distribute 20 of Manga's best selling titles on VideoCD over the next 12 months, so now you'll be able to settle down with a bag of popcorn and watch your favourite Manga movies on your PC.

Manga videos have achieved a large following over the past few years thanks to their distinctive animation style (known as Anime) and adult storylines which often include a high proportion of sex and violence. The science fiction and fantasy themes which feature in many of the videos would seem to appeal particularly to computer users, who make up a considerable percent-

age of Manga fans and followers.

The first four titles will be released on 27th December, and kick off with Akira, the best-loved of all Manga's feature-length cartoons. It has sold over 75,000 copies on VHS video format, making it the best-selling Manga title ever released. The other titles include Appleseed, Ninja Scroll and Street Fighter II: The Animated Movie. Not to be confused with the poorly received Jean Claude Van Damme flick, the Manga version of the arcade beat 'em-up has already proved popular on VHS and CD Vision expects it to be one of the top selling VideoCDs of 1996.

CD Vision has not yet confirmed which other Manga titles it will be releasing

under the agreement, but it is likely that Wicked City, Golgo 13 and Legend of the Overfiend will be among the next batch to hit the shops.

The popularity of Anime among computer users has been instrumental in Manga's decision to release its movies

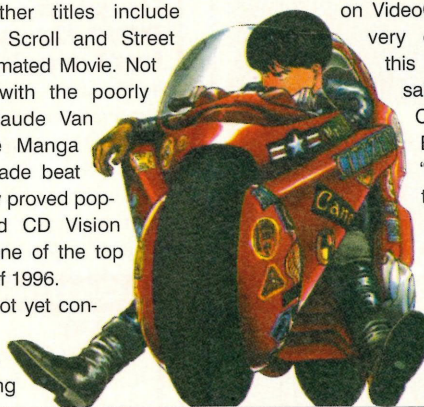
on VideoCD. "Manga is very excited about this new venture," said Andy Frain, CEO of Manga Entertainment. "I firmly believe that fans of the Anime genre are ideally suited to new media developments, including VideoCD. A

recent survey among our 30,000 member UK fan club revealed that more than 90 per cent were regular users of PCs in their home."

This sentiment was echoed by Sam Forrest, group PR executive for CD Vision. "CD Vision has wanted to break into the Anime market for some time. Manga is undoubtedly the leader in this field, and the large number of PC owners who enjoy Manga would seem to indicate that VideoCD is the ideal format for Manga's titles."

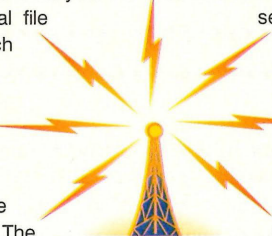
To watch VideoCDs you will need a PC equipped with a CD-ROM drive and an MPEG decoder board such as the Ace MovieMaster 24 or RealMagic card. MPEG boards usually retail between £200 and £300.

For further information about the Manga range, contact CD Vision on (0171) 240 7764.



Radio On

If our netsurf pages haven't tempted you onto the Internet how about the opportunity to listen to programs via the Internet, just like using a radio? A service started by the Internet provider Demon allows you to log on, select a "program" and then hear it via your PC speakers. Unlike normal file downloading, in which the entire file is sent and then played or viewed later, Internet Radio transmits the file in real time with your PC playing the sound as it receives it. The



only problem with the system is that it requires the user staying on line as the broadcast is played, and is constantly sending data over the net - putting a much higher strain on the net than normal file and WEB browsing. More than six or seven users at once brings the server to a halt. Industry speculators however are already predicting that if this early problem can be overcome, then Internet radio will more than likely quickly grow to rival normal broadcast radio.

Blue Whales attacked by computer

With all the great uses technology can be put to it was only natural that someone would find a nature-unfriendly purpose. The NEC corporation and the China Institute of Technology in Japan are researching hi-tech ways of hunting Blue Whales. Initially the technology will be used to monitor whale populations and track their movements and habits. However once the Blue Whale population rises above danger levels (identified by the technology) Japan seems set to start hunting again, this time using the technology against the whale.



▲ Superseded by high tech death.

Amongst the new weapons in their disposal is a probe fired into the whale using a harpoon, this is powered by the motion of the whale as it swims. As the whale moves the probe records information about it (blood temperature etc). This is transmitted to an orbiting satellite when the whale surfaces.

PC Junkies

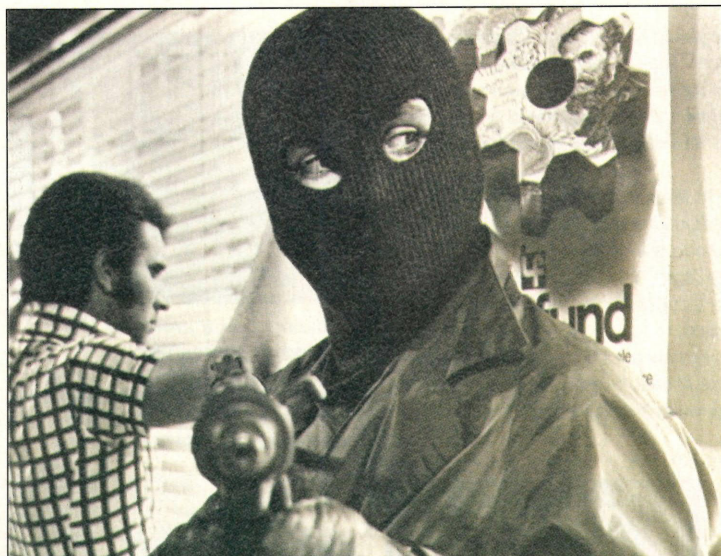
The continuing rise in computer hardware theft has moved into an altogether more frightening phase with the news that PC components are now being traded for drugs.

It's been alleged that in Manchester and Brixton, CPUs and SIMM chips are being used as currency to pay for drugs in street deals. It's safer than cash for buyer and dealer alike because the hardware is untraceable, and both parties are less likely to be convicted on intent charges. It's one thing to be caught with £500 and half an ounce of hash, quite another when the money has been replaced with 32Mb of RAM. The trade doesn't end there, though.

Computer parts are currently fetching huge prices in the Far East, Russia and former Soviet countries where technology is scarce, out of date and expensive. It isn't known whether the stolen equipment is shipped out to these countries to be sold, or whether it is used in another stage of the drugs trade. But there is a serious discrepancy between the amount of stolen hardware reaching the second-hand market and the vast quantities which just seem to vanish.

The actual thefts are no longer the work of opportunists. Organised gangs have taken over. In one instance an eight-floor office block in Manchester was completely stripped over night, while a recent raid by Lancashire police uncovered over 4000 items of IT technology. That's far too much to dump on to the UK market.

If there's any good news to be had out of this, it's that these people are targetting offices rather than the home. However, that's no reason to take security lightly. Make sure you security mark all your hardware and, more importantly secure your house to make it as difficult as possible for anyone to break-in.



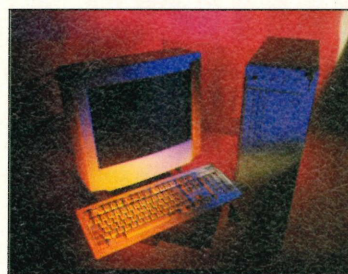
Fastest chip yet

Intel's next generation chip, codenamed the P6, has been officially announced and named. Called (imaginatively) the Pentium Pro, the new chip will be shipped late this year. Early versions of the chip will run at a 'mere' 150MHz, and although faster models are planned, they won't be released until the middle of 1996.

Intel expects that the Pentium Pro will be used initially by corporate server and workstation users, where its massive processing power will benefit 3D graphics applications. The chip will also be

available in desktop PCs, but Intel doesn't foresee it being of any immediate benefit to the home market, which is served adequately by the Pentium. The company believes that home applications do not currently require the kind of processing power delivered by the Pentium Pro, and the high cost of the new chip will effectively put it beyond the reach of home users for some time.

Intel has already signed up 30 manufacturers to produce PCs using the Pentium Pro, including Compaq, Gateway, IBM and Hewlett Packard. We



▲ Next generation P6 - it's official.

hope to bring you first tests of the Pentium Pro shortly.

Warners merge

Confusion between the similarly named Warner Interactive Entertainment, publisher of the forthcoming Z (pictured left), and Time Warner Interactive, publisher of Primal Rage and Endorfun, is now at an end following an announcement that the two companies are to merge. The company will retain the Time Warner Interactive name, but will operate from the Warner Interactive office in London. Time Warner's Northampton office is to close in January, so any queries relating to Time Warner games should be directed to the London number.

Contact Time Warner on (0171) 391 4300.

JVC's deadly mission

JVC's first PC game is an arcade dogfighting sim with a difference. All the planes in Mission Deadly Skies have special moves — just like a beat 'em-up. A novel idea, certainly. But will it work? Find out in early 1996.

Contact JVC on (0171) 240 3121.



In brief

Corel slashes prices

Following Microsoft's recent decision to lower the price of its Home range, Corel has slashed the price of its titles. All products in the Corel CD Home line, which includes Wild Cards, Bernard of Hollywood's Marilyn and the All-Movie Guide, will now retail at £19.99.

Call Corel on (001 613) 728 0826

Rock videos blast on to PC

Record giant PolyGram is releasing a selection of its most popular music videos on VideoCD. The first titles to appear on this format are The Best of Bon Jovi, The Rolling Stones' Gimme Shelter, Tina Turner Live in Barcelona, Abba Gold and The Police in From Outlandos to Synchronicities. Each will be bundled with a PolyGram VideoCD music sampler which includes artists such as U2, The Cure and Pink Floyd. The first VideoCDs are currently available priced £19.99.

Call PolyGram Video on (0181) 910 5000

Six Shooter

Aztech Labs has released a six speed CD-ROM drive for the knock-down price of £149. The drive is an IDE mechanism with an access time of 225 milliseconds. Aztech claims the drive can transfer up to 8.33Mb per second when using an optimised 16-bit IDE interface.

For further information, call Aztech on (01734) 814121.

Budget MPEG

If you're after a faster graphics card but are also thinking about future expansion, VideoLogic has just the thing for you. It has extended its range of multimedia accelerators with the launch of the GraftixStar 400, a card which features the fast S3 graphics chip and 1Mb of on-board RAM for £115. A 2Mb version is also available. The card also supports a range of budget expansions. A TV tuner and video input upgrade is planned for early next year and an MPEG playback module will be available shortly for less than £85.

VideoLogic can be reached on (01923) 260511.

VCI Software

Oops! Our review of CV Writer in the November issue gave the wrong contact number. The correct number is as follows:

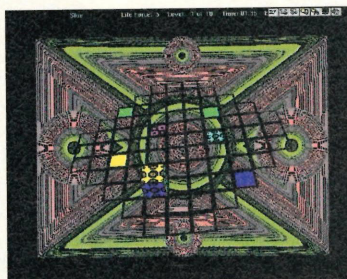
VCI Software (01923) 255558.

Endorfun too fun?

The press went into full scaremonger mode recently over Time Warner's newest release Endorfun. The game, a simple puzzle affair involving rolling a coloured cube over a 3D grid, includes subliminal messages — such as "I am in control", "I am beautiful", "Abundance is my true state of being" — incorporated into the background music. The messages are designed to induce feelings of happiness and wellbeing in the player.

Doctors, teachers and MPs have been up in arms over allegations that the subliminal messages could cause an unnatural addiction to the game in children, since they are supposed to promote the production in the brain of endorphins, natural chemicals which can relieve pain and give a "high". The subliminal technique has already been banned on TV and radio, but a loophole in the law means that computer games are still exempt from the legislation.

For the sake of science, we here at the PC Review offices subjected ourselves to hours of Endorfun in order to note any strange effects. Our conclusion? Well, apart from mild boredom, we found that there were no noticeable effects at all. Look out for a review of the game next month.



▲ **Claims that it promotes the release of endorphins are unproven. Exercise, on the other hand, is known to cause endorphin release, yet children are made to participate in sports at school.**

Net gain



Aiming itself at those who want to surf the net but who don't know where to start, the Instant Access CD is basically a copy of Netscape Navigator with some bells and whistles to make the getting on the net more easier and more interesting. These include connection software, a free month of online time with IBM global network, a video (if you buy before 1st December), a multimedia tour of 2000 pages taken from the World Wide Web, which can either be used as a straightforward reference tool or, if a modem is connected, to provide hotlinks direct into home pages. Instant Access' CD costs £24.99.

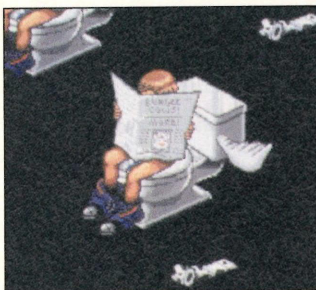
Contact Daze Software on (0171 372 7435) for further details.

Flying loos

Fed up with fish tanks and starry nights? Let's face it, most screensavers are a little on the tasteful side for the Doom-generation of PC owners. But fret not, you gore-hungry lot. Berkely Systems, the company behind the popular After Dark screensaver, has come up with Totally Twisted, the latest in tasteless accessories for your Windows environment.

Among its numerous visual delights, the screensaver includes flying toilets, vomiting chameleons, fatal bungee jumping accidents and fluffy kittens being run over by lawnmowers. All in the best possible taste, of course.

Totally Twisted costs £29.95 from all major retailers, or call World Partners on (0181) 741 8299 for more information.



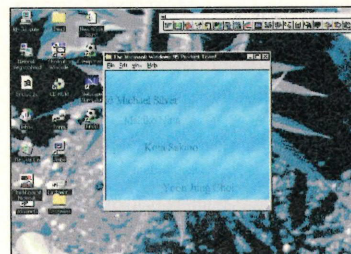
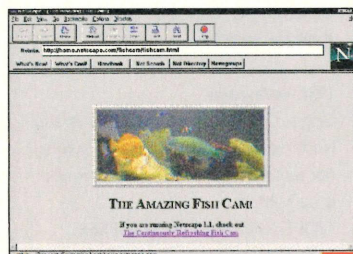
Easter Eggs at Christmas?

One of the oldest traits of programmers has, thanks to the internet, once again become a popular pastime for bored PC hackers. Finding secret cheats in games has always been of great interest, but application software also has the occasional little surprise, or 'Easter Egg', and now there are dedicated web-sites that exist only to find out such trivial items of interest. Here's PC Review's top two Easter Eggs:

● **Microsoft Windows 95.** To see a screen of the developers' names scrolling across a light-blue background with a plinky tune playing, right click on

the mouse in the middle of the desktop and select 'New'. Now select 'Folder', and rename the new folder "and now, the moment you've all been waiting for". Press enter, select it again and rename it "we proudly present for your viewing pleasure". Press enter one more time, and rename name it again "The Microsoft Windows 95 Product Team!". Open the folder, and lo and behold a completely useless credits list, hurrah!

● **Netscape.** On Netscape you only have to press CTRL+ALT+F at any time and it will take you to the fantastic and amazing Fish Cam.



If you're a military simulation fan then you'll be excited by news that software giant Electronic Arts is teaming up with Jane's, the specialist in military reference material. For those not in the know, Jane's is a renowned organisation that publishes numerous military reference works, including Jane's Defence Weekly — the bible of army leaders around the world. The five year deal will allow Electronic Arts (and its partner, Origin) access to the vast database of military information that Jane's has built up over nearly 100 years of war reporting.

The new brand will go by the name of Jane's Combat Simulations, and one of the first titles to emerge will be AH-64D Longbow, a helicopter sim which gives you the chance to pilot attack choppers

in the Gulf War, Panama and the Ukraine. AH-64D Longbow should be around towards the end of this year.

Also due around the same time is Advanced Tactical Fighters, the sequel to the recent US Navy Fighters. It has been billed as a "futuristic flight simulation" and features experimental planes which haven't even been built yet, although they're likely to be in service by the next century.

For details call Electronic Arts on (01753) 549442.

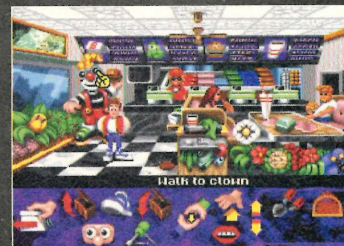


One to watch...

Bud Tucker in Double Trouble

Merit Studios

Simon the Sorcerer and Guybrush Threepwood had better look out. The latest adventure hero to star in his own game is Bud Tucker, a teenager with decidedly dodgy dress sense and an even worse haircut. His search for his kidnapped professor friend lands him in all sorts of trouble — and plenty of wacky antics ensue. Look out for this colourful, comic adventure soon.



Got in from work, said hello to the

kids, switched on the



to catch

the news. Turned on the



to listen

to the weather, programmed the



to record, put a CD into the



and

listened for a while. Decided to potter

about in the garden so I clipped the



to my belt and pottered. After

tea, it was time to do a little work

so I went upstairs and sat in front

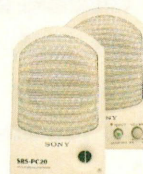
of the



plugged in the



and listened on the



whilst I

researched some info on the



and then the kids kicked me off the

they wanted to play games...



...with the



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News on the latest best-selling software available for your PC

TM	LM	TITLE	BY	CHANGE
1	-	Command & Conquer	Virgin	★
2	-	Championship Manager 2	Domark	★
3	-	Rebel Assault	White Label	★
4	-	The Need for Speed	Electronic Arts	★
5	-	Phantasmagoria	Sierra	★
6	(3)	Star Trek TNG	MicroProse	▼
7	(5)	Day of the Tentacle	White Label	▼
8	(1)	The 7th Guest	White Label	▼
9	(4)	IndyCar Racing	White Label	▼
10	-	Crusader: No Remorse	Electronic Arts	★
11	-	Fade to Black	Electronic Arts	★
12	-	3D Lemmings Demo	Sony Interactive	★
13	-	PGA Tour 96	Electronic Arts	★
14	(8)	Dark Forces	White Label	▼
15	(9)	Discworld	Sony Interactive	▼
16	-	Sim City	White Label	★
17	-	Simon the Sorcerer	Adventure Soft	■
18	(2)	Mechwarrior 2	Activision	▼
19	-	AutoRoute Express	Microsoft	★
20	-	Microsoft Flight Sim	Microsoft	■

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1	(6)	AutoRoute Express	Microsoft	▲
2	(1)	X-Wing Triple Pack	US Gold	▼
3	(2)	Sim City 2000	Maxis	▼
4	(8)	Microsoft Flight Sim	Microsoft	▲
5	(4)	Ultimate Doom	GT	▼
6	(3)	Doom II	Virgin	▼
7	(16)	Premier Manager 3	Gremlin	▲
8	-	Jungle Strike	Gremlin	■
9	-	F14/Subwar 2050	MicroProse	★
10	(7)	Player Manager 2	Anco	▼

BUDGET

1	(2)	Magic Boy	Empire	▲
2	-	Doom	Crystal Vision	■
3	(4)	Day of the Tentacle	White Label	▲
4	(6)	CyClones	Mindscape	▲
5	-	Formula One Grand Prix	PowerPlus	★
6	(3)	Dawn Patrol	Empire	▼
7	(9)	Dune 2	White Label	▲
=8	(7)	Syndicate	Hit Squad	▼
=8	-	Fields of Glory	PowerPlus	★
10	-	Professional CV Writer	VCI Software	★

KEY: TM = THIS MONTH, LM = LAST MONTH

UP = ▲ DOWN = ▼ NO CHANGE = ★ NEW ENTRY = ☆ RE-ENTRY = ■



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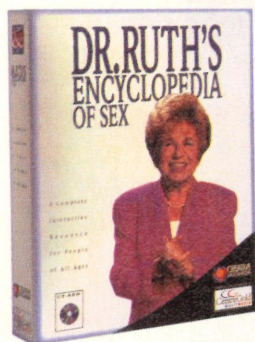
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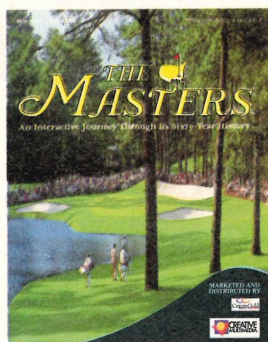
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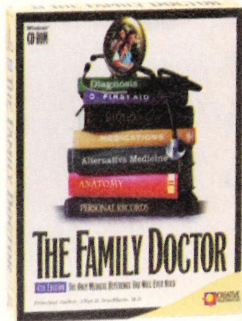
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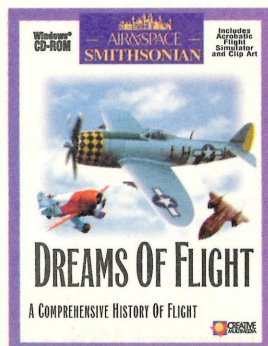
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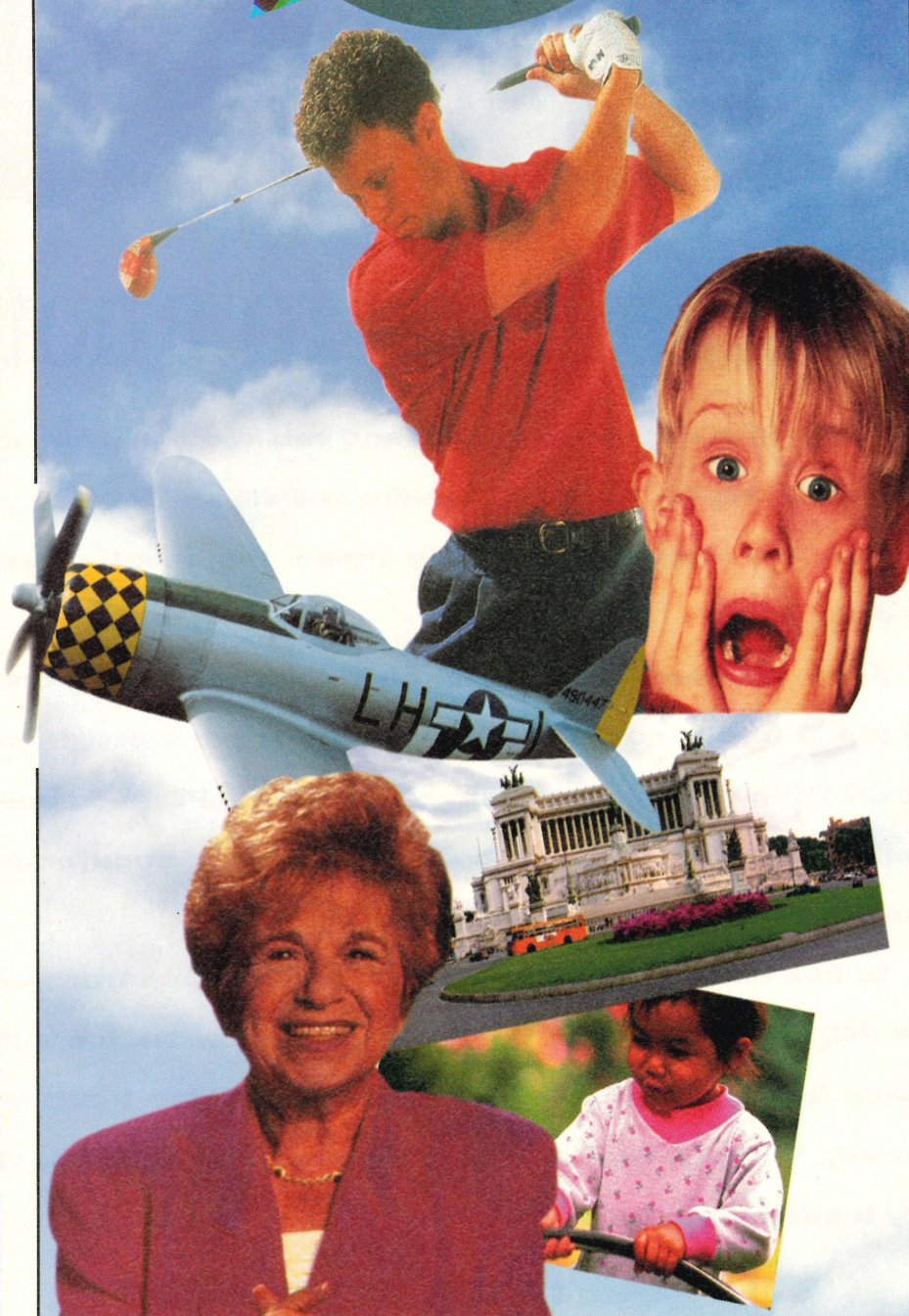
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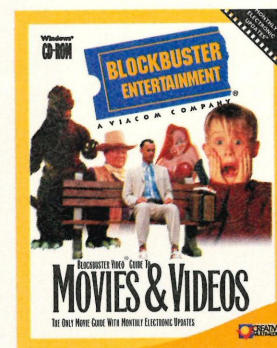
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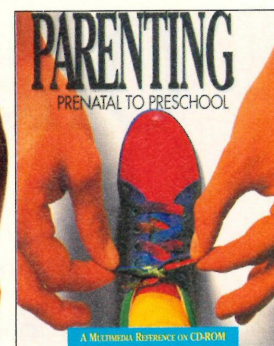
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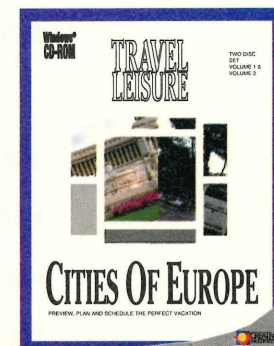
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Going Dutch

Illustration by Richard Jenkins

In the second in a series of 'wired city' guides, Adam Peters travels to Amsterdam where he finds computer fairs, Virtual Reality machines and the scariest traffic system in the world.

Where PCs and furniture collide... ▼



The receptionist peers over her glasses, fixing me with the sort of stare that could melt raw iron. "Are you sure you're a doctor?" she asks. I pat the plastic toy stethoscope round my neck and look at her as if she's stupid. She gives me a form to fill in.

Ten minutes later my photographer is led out to the foyer. He looks remark-

ities." A thought crosses my mind. "Oh, but you're on the wagon now, though, aren't you?"

"How long until our train leaves?" asks the lensman.

"An hour," I reply.

"Time for a few pints then."

Bingo!

Our first destination is Holland's largest exhibition centre, the RAI, cur-

exhibitor's mailing list. Not that we want to get on any junk mail databases, we have worthier intentions. After sauntering round for a bit — checking out the Epson, Novell and Hewlett Packard stands, amongst others — we home in on the largest display space in the building, the one belonging to Microsoft.

Although there are separate display areas (complete with kindergarten style coloured pews) for products like MS Office, the majority of the company's massive square footage is given over to Windows 95. Giant boxes bearing the product's name hang from every available surface. In front of a giant screen and a fascinated throng are two besuited gents. These seem to be the Dutch equivalent of Laurel and Hardy. The fat one sits at the desk explaining the program's intricacies in expert detail (I think... he's talking in Dutch, so what do I know?). The thinner one points to the screen every now and then and says something in a silly voice that has the less discerning male audience members in hysterics. Possibly something along the lines of "I had a girl on my desktop once". The routine is, I am sure, hilarious.

I want an argument, though. "Hello," I

ably fresh, clean shaven and with a spring in his step and a sparkle in his eye that are ample recompense for the month he's spent here in one of London's top drying-out clinics.

"Hello... er... doctor," he says, winking at me.

Outside I fill him in with details of the assignment. "I've got PC Review to pay for us to go to Amsterdam. As long as you can get a photo of a computer, you can spend the rest of the day indulging in the city's more, um, recreational facil-

rently playing host to "Efficiency Beurs 95", an exhibition that covers everything from computer hardware and software to office furniture and stationery. Imagine a cross between the Ideal Home Exhibition and a PC fair and you're just about there.

We pick up our admission passes, which quite cleverly include a computer chip that stores all your information (name, company, job, address, etc). These can be quickly scanned at the stands to whack your details onto the



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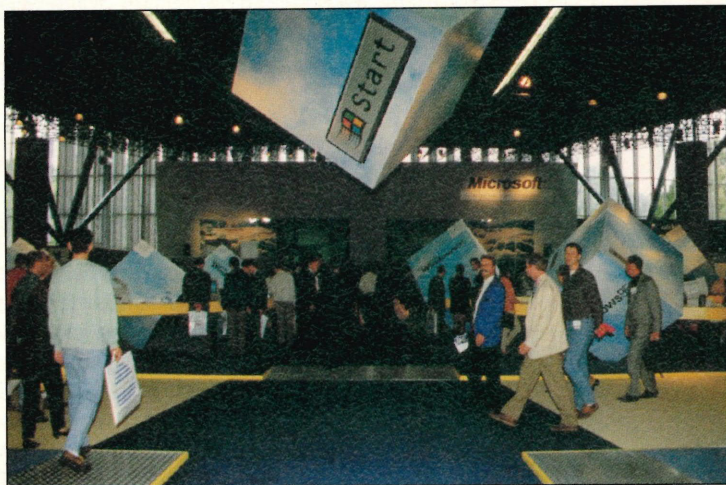


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say to the woman on the information desk, "I'm from a magazine. I want to have a go at someone about some of the flaws in Windows 95." Her expression remains static as she informs me that their PR person is back at the office and I can't talk to anyone else. Time to go undercover and home in on anyone wearing a Microsoft badge.

"Hello, I'm an ordinary member of the public."

"Hello, are you English?"

"Yes. Tell me, Windows 95... is it any good then?"

"Certainly, yes. It is a great advancement on earlier editions, with many extra facilities, such as..."

"So it's not obviously flawed?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You didn't just release it because it has been plugged for so long with '95 in the title that it was in danger of taking until 1996 to release? Why doesn't it work with some games that work with

▲Microsoft – pre-Adam. A nest of of English language denial and a short PC Review reporter who changes hair colour daily.

Windows 3.1? Why does it slow down the loading of some applications? Why have we heard stories of users installing it on their machines for a couple of weeks, then having to replace it with an

earlier version? Why oh why?"

"I'm sorry, I don't speak English."

"Yes you do."

"No, I only know a few words."

"But you just..."

"Wat zegt u? Ik spreek geen Engels. U hebt geslachtsziekte. Er is iets mis met jouw neus. Het spijt

mij. Tot ziens."

As my interviewee shuffles off I see the woman from the information desk walking across, fixing me with a scary glare. She is carrying a sharpened clipboard. Time to leave, perhaps.

The Efficiency Beurs hasn't been a great success this year, with only 2,500 visitors on the first day (a very low number bearing in mind the size of the exhibition centre). People involved in the Dutch computer industry were said to be disappointed, and the majority now feel that large fairs of this type are no longer viable. The trade would prefer specialised exhibitions (just software, just hardware, just office supplies, etc) and ordinary consumers are only interested in fairs where they can 'try then buy'. They have a point. Another Efficiency Beurs at RAI is thought unlikely.

Myster or misses?

Our next destination is Myster 2000, Amsterdam's only Internet café. Set up six months ago by an owner who now seems to regret it (see Luc Sala inter-

▲A representative of Microsoft, post-Adam, proving that language isn't the best defence against a mad, stalking journalist.

Luc Sala: "the Internet is dead!"

A well-known figure in the self-fulfilling 'zippie' movement (business-inclined hippies) and a former physicist, Luc has been publishing Dutch computer magazines — many focusing on the mind-elevating potential of technology — for the past 12 years. He has been concerned with the psychological implications of computers for the past 10 years, makes programmes for local cable TV, and co-wrote the first ever academic study of Virtual Reality (published in 1990, with contributions from luminaries such as Timothy Leary and William Gibson).

Six months ago Luc set up Myster 2000, Amsterdam's Internet café. The venture has not been the success he was expecting and Luc has become very disillusioned with the Net. He is an amiable, if shamelessly self-promoting, middle-aged hippie. Hardened Netsurfers

may find his views on the World Wide Web a little uncompromising...

"The Internet is a pyramid marketing scam. As an individual you have to find three or four new suckers to go on the Net to increase your own rank. You start off by getting e-mail and you think that makes you better than other people — you've made the first rank. Having your own home page is the second rank, an ISDN link is the third and so on. You become a cyberfascist, a telekomasars. It's part of this whole culture that believes 'I'm better than you because I know more'. That idea

is so dangerous because it doesn't serve human values.

"People are starting to find out that there's nothing you can do with the Internet. There are 600 million pages on the Net, but how many of them are of use to the average person? Any of them? When Myster opened individuals seemed to be interested in the Net for about two months, now you're lucky if it's two weeks.

"I used to have 'sala/eros/girls' as the address of my home page. There were no pictures of girls on there, but

plenty of people surfing the Net were attracted by the title. I got 300 calls a day just because of the name. It's depressing.

"The psychological profile of the Net user is someone whose T-shirt slogan is 'I know therefore I am'. That's the reason the Internet will die with this generation. The next generation have the slogan 'I see therefore I am'.

"The Internet

shouldn't be going up in size, quality and digitisation; it should be taking a lead from cable TV. We don't need a digital highway, we need digital footpaths. Community services. A place to get information on your local football team or a wedding in your street... the RABO Bank (the Dutch farmers' bank) has recently decided it wants to use the Net to re-establish the function of the local banker as an information broker in small local communities. That's an important realisation. The future of the Internet lies in its application on a local rather than international basis."



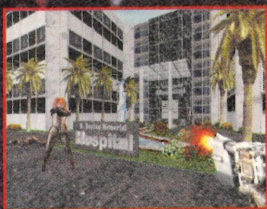
view above), Myster is actually a pretty snazzy place. Far more laid back than British internet cafs, many of which have the ambience of a hospital, Myster also features brain machines (headache-inducing hippie lightshows), together with a large exhibition space that plays host to classes in everything from meditation and tai-chi to Netsurfing and video-conferencing. They've also got a chilled Coca Cola can dispenser which, unlike the one in the PCR offices, includes Heineken as one of the options. (Proper 5% alcohol continental Heineken as well, not the 3.4% dross they fob off on us Brits.) A result!

What do you say about a place that has bronze statues of Buddha sitting alongside giant video screens displaying Net pages? Other than to point out that our visit quite conveniently tied in with Holland's (and possibly the world's) first ever Virtual Reality expo.

Custom(s)phile

A successful assignment, then, largely because we were too busy working to get distracted by bars, dope houses or prostitutes, although the photographer did ruminate on what we could do with our remaining expenses money (the prospect of trying to claim back a receipt for a "Hugh Grant" seemed too troublesome). As we boarded the ferry for our stormy return crossing, I felt quite pleased that we'd come through unscathed.

Of course I'd forgotten about the difficulties my photographer's fondness for famous Oscar Wilde quotes was likely to incur at Harwich port customs. The last time I saw him he was being led into a small room by a man in rubber gloves who was muttering, "genius, eh?" If there are blank spaces in this feature where the photos should be, just draw your own. I'm going to bed...



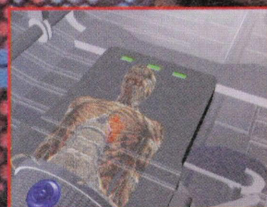
Jump, duck and move with speed! Using the powerful "Build" engine exclusively licensed from 3D REALMS



Watch your back! Advanced enemy artificial intelligence.



A near virtual metropolis with 7 distinct areas. Ride subways and buses. Explore offices, hospitals alleyways, sewers and more!



Network play for up to 16 and head-to-head Modem play

**Welcome to
the future!
Welcome to new
Los Angeles!**

Battle corrupt TEK Lords and their minions. These criminals are destroying the population with TEK, a mind-altering hallucinogenic. Engage in combat against these super-intelligent felons using high-tek weapons and equipment. Your boss is Walter Bascom (alias William Shatner), the head of the elite Cosmos Detective Agency. He will guide you through the labyrinth that is this virtual city as you battle to save Los Angeles from the silent destruction of TEK.

William Shatner

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWAR™



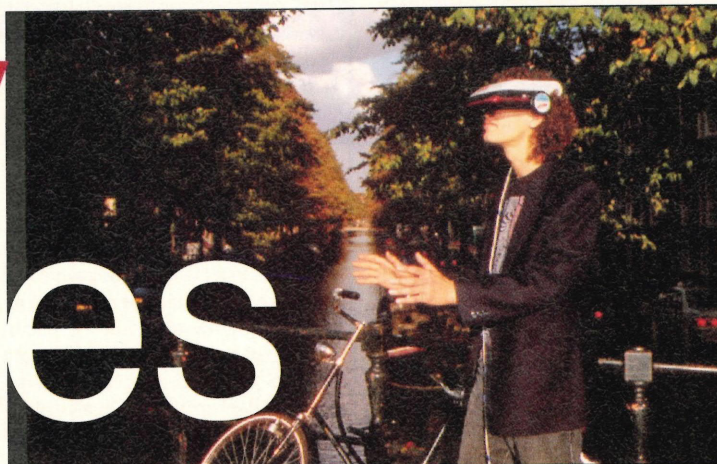
INTRACORP
INC.

IBM CD-ROM

USGOLD

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Reality Bytes



On the 27th September this year, Holland's leading VR companies joined forces to show off the next generation of VR machines. Adam Peters was the only British journalist present.

This might be a big day in the history of Virtual Reality. It might not be. Only the future can put the present into perspective. However, the fact that seven or eight of Holland's leading VR hardware and software manufacturers are getting together to jointly market their products across Europe (and possibly wider afield) must count for something.

The press conference at Amsterdam's Myster 2000 is entirely in Dutch. Though I did start learning the language earlier this year, I got bored by page five of the Teach Yourself book and my knowledge sadly only stretches to the phrase "Mijn naam is Adam, wat is jouw naam?" (trans: "My name is Adam, what is your name?") Unfortunately none of the four speakers at the conference use this phrase, so I'm none the wiser. Still, judging by the faces of the people listening, nobody had anything interesting to say apart from the usual "Virtual Reality is

future/isn't Amsterdam lovely this time of year?"

Still, I press on and manage to sneak up on, and eventually corner, the first speaker, Myster owner Luc Sala, and ask for a summary. "I wrote a book on VR five years ago and since then nothing seems to have happened," he moans. "There are three things that need to happen: standardisation, useful applications and the involvement of large companies. Companies like HP and IBM have a limited involvement, but not to the required level. Some applications are appearing, but VR's practical use in architecture, arcades, the military and theme parks has yet to be realised. Standardisation? Not yet."

The link-up between the main Dutch companies is universally acclaimed as A Good Thing in Holland, though, and in conversation with exhibitors, even those with links to manufacturers of high-end machines, I find that the consensus holds the PC, rather than large graphics workstations, to be the future of VR.

▲ Come to sunny Amsterdam, see the sights. Er, bring a friend to make sure you can find them.

Everyone is buoyed by statistics which point to pan-European computer literacy compared to countries such as America.

Gerard Olde Olthof, marketing manager for the new Dutch consortium, believes the real challenge comes in convincing people that VR will be useful to them. "There are actually more computers in homes and education in Europe than there are in America," he says, "so there is a good base there. The two problems facing the VR industry are budgetary constraints and the public's ignorance. Costs will go down and ignorance is something we will just have to deal with".

Gerard believes the big breakthrough in development will come once the public realise how VR can benefit them: "I'd say we're probably talking about five to seven years from now. Once people start bringing VR systems into their

The VR future...

Here then are details of some of the festival's best displays, together with fairly arbitrary scores out of ten. Virtually all of these products attach to the PC, though many also incorporate their own hardware. This is the new generation of VR machines, and with a joint marketing strategy pushing them all, other companies — and other countries — are going to have to respond fast or else be forever playing catch-up...

GREEN DINO BV

A fairly conventional display, consisting of a VR environment running on a PC with the mouse used for manoeuvres. A far higher quality of 3D than you'd find in a game, mainly (one expects) because the computer doesn't have to concern itself with anything other than plotting the environment.

PCR Score 4/10

SGI

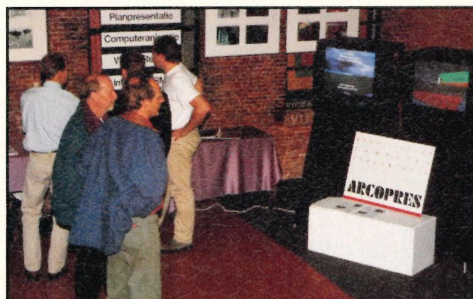
A VR construction system, running on an ordinary PC and featuring lots of different shapes and textures. Impressive if not earth-shattering.

PCR Score 6/10

ARCOPRES

The name stands for Architecture Computer Presentations, an unnervingly English acronym for a company whose documentation comes entirely in Dutch (most of the other exhibitors opted for English press releases). The company has two screens up and running showing walk-throughs of buildings. These are incredibly smooth and detailed, but neither builders nor estate agents rate highly in my list of favourite people, so I move quickly on.

PCR score 5/10

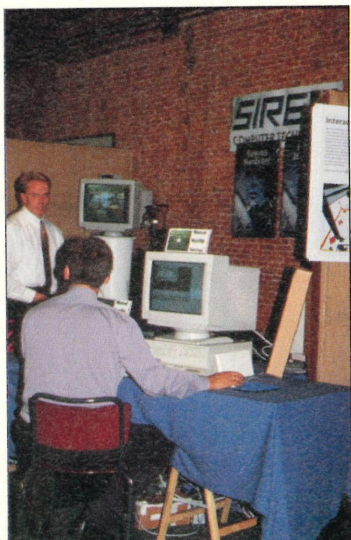


I-GLASSES

Now here's something special. Virtual Products' i-glasses come in two versions, the video version (which works with video machines, TVs, CD-i and games consoles) and an upgraded computer version that also operates with PCs, Apples and Amigas. Incorporating audio speakers hanging over your ears and a screen for each eye (at the traditional VR 'tunnel vision' distance), i-glasses work in much the same way with vision, as surround sound and home cinema systems work with sound, cleverly separating everything to create an impressively convincing illusion of 3D. The Head Tracker option also allows you to control your on-screen movement with tilts of the head instead of using a mouse. Though it does rattle your temples worryingly when you try to look upwards and will probably make you go mad with continued use, the system does work with practically everything and if 3D is your thing, you'll love it.

PCR Score: 8/10





▲ **Not the most glamorous of displays, but the technology on show was amazing.**

homes, costs will go down rapidly and the money will be there for manufacturers to fully realise the potential. I'm talking about systems that tell what you're looking at and with what level of enthusiasm; systems where a squeeze of the right jaw will initiate a radio link; body suits with transmitters that will not only allow the military to trace men missing in action, but will also provide them with information about the soldier's injuries and mental state so they can arrive prepared. These things are already possible."

Define VR, Gerard. "We live in three dimensions. Academics talk about time as the fourth dimension. Virtual Reality is the fifth dimension. It will enable you to see what other people are seeing."

SIREX

The largest and most prestigious of the Dutch VR companies, Sirex has two different products on display, both of which are raising eyebrows from all quarters.

CrystalEyes

Wooah, scary! The CrystalEyes VR system uses a triangle of speakers that sits on your monitor. This sends out an ultrasound array aimed at the microphones concealed in the lightweight goggles that you wear. An infra-red emitter picks up these signals, allowing the software to calculate head movements far more quickly than possible with conventional in-headset VR movement systems. This sounds impressive on its own, but what really knocks me out is the 3D camera Sirex has connected to its display system. Using two slightly-separated camera views and the diffusion in the goggles (similar to cinema 3D and those old Viewmaster machines) this allows you to view yourself on screen in 3D, or at least pseudo-3D. Very weird, especially when you reach out to the camera; you actually seem to touch your own hand. I think it's called an out-of-body experience. Whatever, it's the strangest thing I've ever seen a computer do.

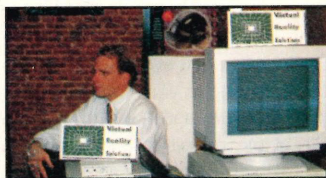
PCR Score 9/10



BioMuse EXCLUSIVE

PC Review is the only British magazine to have seen this system, which — though still in development — is the real star of the show. BioMuse is a bio-electric signal controller, which is a very technical way of saying that it can read the electrical impulses in the body (muscle movements, eye motion, heart and brain waves). Science fiction becomes science fact. In practical terms the system consists of an armband (which measures pulse and muscle activity), a legband (which measures muscle activity) and a headband that reads electronic signals from the brain and activity in muscles just below the eye (which equate to eye motion). Everything runs into a controller/patchbay and then into the PC. The possible applications of this software are phenomenal; from air traffic controllers, who will only have to look at a plane on their radar for all its data to appear, to televised football matches (cameras often lose the ball, how about a camera running off the eye motion of a spectator wearing a headset)? It's early days for this system, and there is talk of a full body suit with infra-red transmitters. Suffice to say, this is VR being pushed to its limits. The future wears headbands.

PCR Score 9.5/10



Amsterdam Busters

THE CAFÉ

You can find *Myster 2000* at 92 Lijnbaansgracht in the Jordaan. Promoted as a 'Cyberspace Mystery School' the centre offers e-mail access for £2 for five minutes (you can prepare your messages on another computer) and Internet access for a very reasonable £4 an hour — £6 with private tuition. There are also plenty of other facilities there, primarily so-called 'electronic drugs' (brain machines, etc). Get in touch with the caff via the telephone (00-31-20-627-4313) or the Net (<http://www.euro.net/sala/myster>) for more information.

NET SITES

There's a frightening amount of Amsterdam based stuff on the Internet. Just do a Yahoo or Webcrawler search using the city's name to be presented with a list of them all. As well as the usual academic stuff and city guides, you'll also find representatives of the city's burgeoning counter-culture plus a few on-line art galleries.

VR COMPANIES

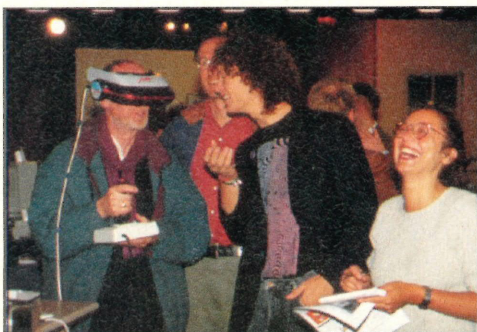
For information on i-glasses telephone Virtual Products on 00-49-6251-802200 (Germany).

Sirex can be contacted on 00-31-74-250-5400. For contact details on any of the other products listed here, call the consortium, Virtual Reality Solutions on 00-31-53-433-9285 for information.

► LAVA

Superscape is the name of these folks' VR system. The name sounds similar to Freescape, the early VR system used in games like Driller and Total Eclipse. An old book on Virtual Reality included some Superscape (presumably an early version of this program) applications on floppy disk. A traditional VR headset and joystick arrangement for a system that seems aimed mainly at the games market. Very high quality, and awarded an extra half-mark because their employee Patrick Hogenboom (a PC Review reader) agrees to model the headset on the streets of Amsterdam for a photo (see page 41). Respect!

PCR Score 8.5/10



SUN

Here our attention is drawn to VideoLabs' desktop colour video camera and the VidCall software it's running through. The camera (which looks like a table lamp with a plug in place of the lamp) provides a very sharp and non-jerky image on screen, and the software puts this in a box running under Windows. Full operation with modems and the Internet are possible, enabling high-quality PC video-conferencing. Smart.

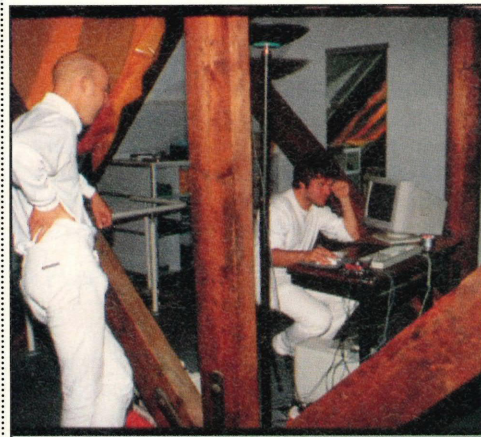
PCR Score 8/10



TAG

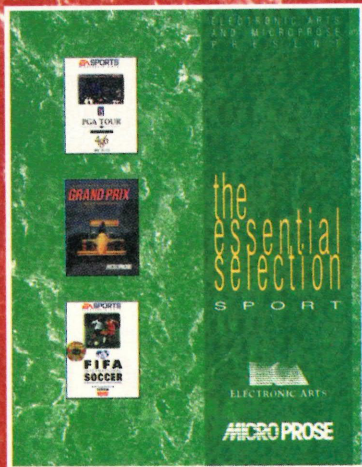
Puzzling, this. A sign points upstairs. On the top floor we find a darkened room, a couple of brain machines and a projected image bearing a slogan along the lines of 'boys are nice'. Two blokes in strange white suits stand nearby. We leave rather quickly fearing for our lives and other, more important things, scoring this display purely on the basis of the quality of the techno music on their sound system.

PCR Score 6/10



Electronic Arts & MicroProse present...

SPORT



PGA TOUR® 486

91% PC Zone

Formula One Grand Prix

86% PC Format

FIFA International Soccer

88% PC Format

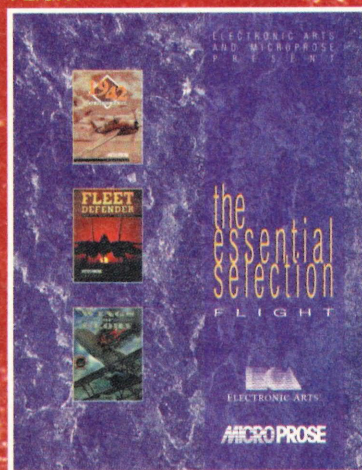
Electronic Arts and MicroProse, two of the world's leading software houses, have come together to bring you **THE ESSENTIAL SELECTION**, three compilations

featuring some of the greatest games ever released on PC CD-ROM. The **BUSINESS** selection includes Theme Park™, Bullfrog's ground-breaking, hilarious profit and pleasure simulation, and Transport Tycoon™, MicroProse's

addictive big business bonanza. **SPORT** features FIFA International Soccer and PGA TOUR® 486, cutting edge sports games from EA SPORTS™, and roaring racing action in MicroProse's Formula One Grand Prix, while

FLIGHT offers three critically-acclaimed masterpieces in 1942 Pacific Air War, Fleet Defender and Origin's Wings of Glory™. The essence of gaming, from the masters of quality.

FLIGHT



1942 Pacific Air War

93% PC Games

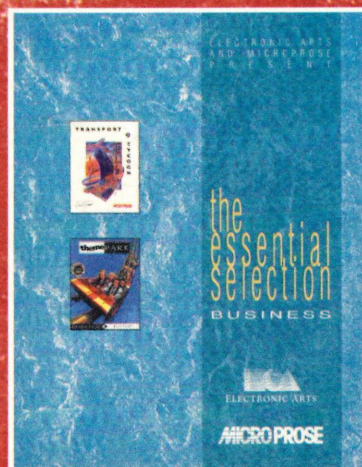
Fleet Defender

88% PC Gamer

Wings of Glory™

89% PC Power

BUSINESS



Transport Tycoon

9/10 PC Review

Theme Park

93% PC Zone

the essential selection



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Racing fans are in for a treat this month, with a review of Virgin's superb **IndyCar 2**. We also get to grips with **Mortal Kombat 3**. Look out also for **Hexen** and (finally) **Stonekeep**. No, really.

Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives a single mark out of 10 to rate games. The score takes into account elements such as playability, graphics and sound. We aim to test to completion — where applicable. We're very tough on games: five is the halfway mark so anything rated higher is above average. A game must be exceptional to rate an eight or nine out of ten.

High Lights



Hexen	60
Mortal Komat 3	68
Battle Isle 3	82
Crusader	92

War doesn't have to be hell — it can be fun too. Cal Jones gets to battle it out with the Bitmap Brothers' latest offering.



Brad and Alan, the Beavis and Butthead of robots, transport your troops from one world to the next. Their drunken antics feature in many of the cut-scenes.

Blown Away



CD ONLY

Publisher: Time Warner

Contact: (0171) 391 4300

Price: TBA

Expected release: Nov. 1995

The noble pursuit of wargaming has become much more fun recently. If the very mention of the word "wargame" conjures up images of dull, olive and brown hex-based maps and tiny counters representing hundreds of troops, then **Z** should come as a pleasant surprise to you. In **Z** you fight your battle in real-time, using individual troops who have been invested with different abilities and personalities. The action is fast, furious and explosive, with all too visible carnage as you attempt to win territories from the enemy.

Comparisons between it and Westwood's **Command and Conquer** are inevitable, but according to **The Bitmaps'** Eric Matthews, the similarities are only superficial. Whereas **C&C** involved a lot of resource management as the player had to build installations, harvest tiberium and balance budgets,

► **General Zod — your big, bad boss.**



▲ **Complete the game, and Zod allows your robot troops to celebrate.**

Z: In Progress

Z is faster, more immediate and, in his words, more fun. Each level is broken up into different territories which you must take over and protect, and some of these contain buildings such as factories. It's here in these situations that you will find yourself building troops and tanks, so it's vital to win as many factories as you can to gain the advantage. **Z**

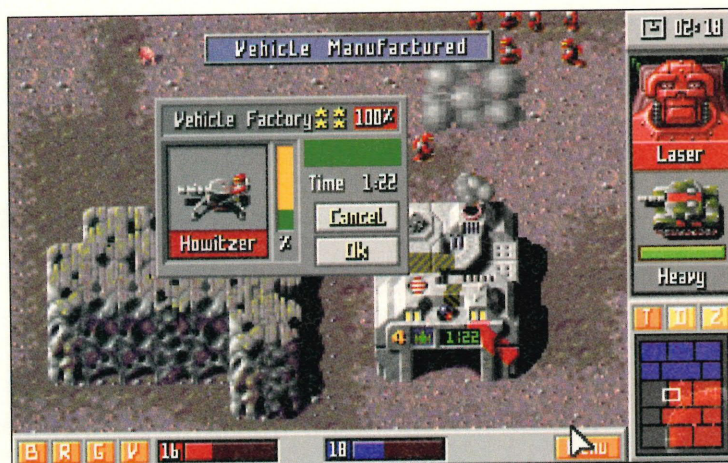
is undoubtedly accessible anyone can pick it up and play without having to wade through pages of a huge manual beforehand, and the simple, early missions allow you to learn the strate-



gies while you play through the game.

Unlike **C&C**, your troops are made up of robots rather than human soldiers. This has little to do with censorship ratings — it was more a case of making sure the game didn't get too serious. "We didn't want the soldiers lying there spurting blood as in **Cannon Fodder**," says Matthews, "but it's still pretty violent. Even though the soldiers are robots, they have personalities and you do get attached to them." There are six different types of robot (all wonderfully animated), each with their own traits. Toughs aren't terribly bright, but they can take a lot of punishment, psychos never retreat and snipers are intelligent and alert. They even exhibit their traits when resting. Psychos drink and smoke, while snipers get their binoculars out to search for potential targets. And sometimes the robots take pot





▲ **Factories produce everything from robots and tanks to weapons. Except baby milk that is.**

◀ **Factories are extremely important. If you manage to win one from the enemy, you also get to keep whatever it was building there at the time.**



▲ **To take a territory you must capture the flag. In this case, though, it's a bit too well-defended.**



◀ **Water (found, oddly, on the desert world) can be used to your strategic advantage. Robots can submerge themselves in it, and then pop up to surprise the enemy.**



▲ **Protect your fort (bottom left) at all costs — or it'll be game over.**



▲ **This is Z in VGA mode, but you'll also be able to play in SVGA.**

shots at the local fauna, though the animals do get their ownback occasionally.

The main advantage Z has over Westwood's game is the level of artificial intelligence. In C&C, if you left a unit for two long they'd just sit there and await orders while the enemy blew them to bits. In Z, the robots fight back. They're also better at finding their way around the battlefield, making use of any vehicles they find en route to their destination, or, if armed with rockets or grenades, blowing away rocks to avoid walking around them.

The game takes place over five planets — arctic, jungle, desert, urban and volcanic — and each contains four missions. Early missions take around seven minutes to complete, providing a gentle introduction, whilst the final mission takes over two hours. There are also eight levels specifically designed for head-to-head play, since Matthews

believes that levels created with one player in mind don't always work well for multiplayer gaming.

Rendered speechless

As you make progress you are rewarded with new hardware and robots, plus impressive cut-scenes which mark the end of each level. There are scenes for losing and winning, and for moving from one planet to the next. All are in a humorous vein, and many feature the antics of Brad and Alan, two hard-drinking space pilots who always seem to get on the wrong side of their fierce CO, General Zod. The animation is exceptional in these sequences. In many games that use rendered graphics, even the human characters walk with a stiff, robotic gait. "Bad animation," comments Matthews. So, somewhat perversely, Z's robots

move in a more humanlike way, right down to the manifold expressions on their faces.

Z also boasts a thumping good soundtrack. As well as the gunfire, the voices of the robots and the inevitable explosions, there are three different musical tracks which play throughout the game. Rather like LucasArts' i-Muse system, the music is context-sensitive, changing according to what is going on on the battlefield. Play for long enough and you'll get to recognise when you're under attack just by listening to the music, which is very handy when there's a lot going on.

But the music, like the cut-scenes, looks set to be just the icing on an already very tasty cake. It's been a long time coming, but the Bitmaps Bothers' Z will be released any minute now for DOS, with a Windows 95 version to follow on later. I, for one, can't wait.



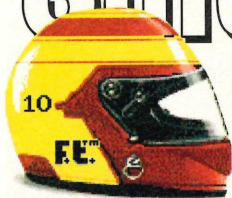
◀ **Robots vary from the cheap and cheerful grunt (left) to the dangerous psycho.**

Win a level and you are rewarded with a gratifying cut-scene. The cut-scenes were created using 3D Studio, and have none of the jerkiness you often see with rendered animations.



Cal Jones is a menace behind the wheel, so we thought she'd be safer watching from the sidelines.

Smells like team spirit



Formula One Grand Prix Manager: In Progress

Publisher: MicroProse

Contact: (01454) 326 532

Price: TBA

Release date: November 95

Oh, the joys of being a Formula One racing driver, eh? Strapping yourself into what is essentially a rocket on wheels, zooming around Monza at 200mph and getting paid millions of pounds for the privilege... Sounds great! Except that it's not really like that. As a racing driver you'd have to put up with all sorts of discomforts, such as being horribly burnt in crashes or developing a terrible itch on your left buttock on the first lap of a 70 lap race.

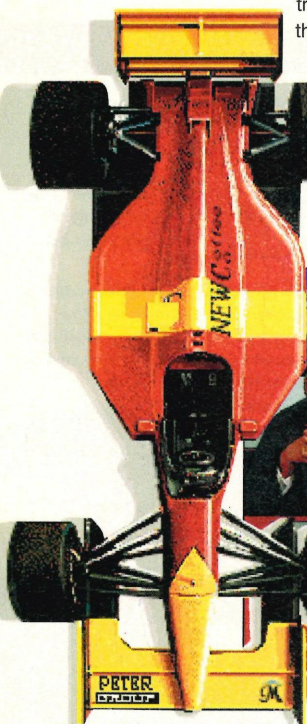
Formula One games, then, are great because you get to experience all the exciting stuff (except the millions of pounds bit, of course) without any of the accompanying problems. You won't get kicked off the team because the number two driver beat you three times in a row, nor will you be disqualified because your aerodynamics specialist thought your car would handle better with a plank tied to the bottom.

Problems

However, that's just the sort of problem you'll have to contend with as team manager. If you want to take a break from behind the wheel, MicroProse's Grand Prix Manager gives you the chance to watch from your comfortable trackside seat while your drivers risk their necks instead.

There are two ways to play Grand Prix

The rules get tougher every year — next season you'll be restricted to one litre Robin Reliants. Grand Prix Manager is approved by the Formula One Association, so teams, drivers and rules should be authentic. ▼



▲ **Car set-up is a vital part of racing. This is Damon Hill's car, so, er, let's make it fast, eh? Just try not to make any mistakes — drivers can get injured.**

Manager. The first, designed for beginners,

allows you to buy a racing team "off the peg" and try to steer it to glory. In this mode, you have to balance budgets, allocating funds for research and development, hiring better drivers, purchasing equipment and so on. The second, however, is far more satisfying. Starting with a large wad of cash, you have to assemble your team from scratch, buying cars and engines, signing up drivers and arranging sponsorship. Naturally, you won't be able to afford the very best cars, drivers and mechanics straight off — it's no good splashing out on Michael Schumacher if you can only afford to give him an Austin Maxi.

Then there's the tactics bit. This is where you get to boss the drivers around, deciding when they should make their fuel and tyre stops and

haranguing them for spinning off after attempting a particularly suicidal overtaking manoeuvre on the way to the pits. There are cut-scenes during the races for added excitement, but these are just icing on the cake. Much of the appeal lies in hard bargaining and generally being boss. There have been a lot of great football management games, why shouldn't the formula work for one of the world's most glamorous sports?



▲ **You can raise money by buying tacky merchandise, sticking your logo on it and flogging it to unsuspecting Formula One fans. How about a "My other car's a Pacific" bumper sticker? No?**



▲ **Sponsorship can bring in a few pennies — meet the new Coca-Cola Williams team. Or perhaps you might be better off being sponsored by Andrex.**

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take the courage and skill of an elite fighter pilot
assailant with unrivalled dedication and expertise.

good and evil have been reversed, it will
to conquer these missions; a unique
Do you have what it takes to defend the Empire?



*COMBINES ORIGINAL TIE FIGHTER GAME PLUS THE ORIGINAL CAMPAIGN DISK, DEFENDER OF THE EMPIRE, BOTH
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NEW BONUS CAMPAIGN WITH NEARLY TWO DOZEN NEW MISSIONS *FLY AND ENCOUNTER A MULTITUDE OF NEW
SPACE VEHICLES *NEARLY 100 MISSIONS YOU CAN FLY NON-SEQUENTIALLY.

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JCB racing!
Hurrah! ▶



Fast forward

If it's big and red, you can guarantee Cal Jones will want to get her teeth into it.

Big Red Racing: In Progress

There are three different kinds of driving game. We have serious simulations such as Formula One Grand Prix or IndyCar Racing, which are supposed to be as close to the real thing as the programmers can make them. Then we have arcade games like Screamer or Fatal Racing, which are fast-paced and fun without being all that realistic. And then there's Big Red Racing.

Mean machines

Big Red, for want of a better description, is like Micro Machines in 3D. It's designed to be fun rather than accurate (it does, in fact, blow a large raspberry in the face of physics), and like Micro Machines features a wide range of vehicles including JCBs, hovercraft, inflatable boats and jeeps. All the vehicles have their own characteristics and handling capabilities,

though don't go expecting them to handle like the real thing. When you set up your car (or boat

Publisher: Domark

Contact: (0181) 780 2224

Price: TBA

Release date: November 95

etc) you'll be choosing decorations for the bonnet rather than calibrating the engine.

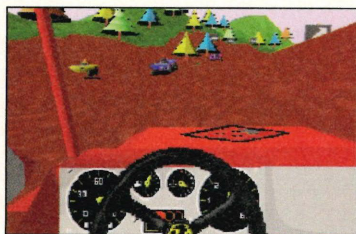
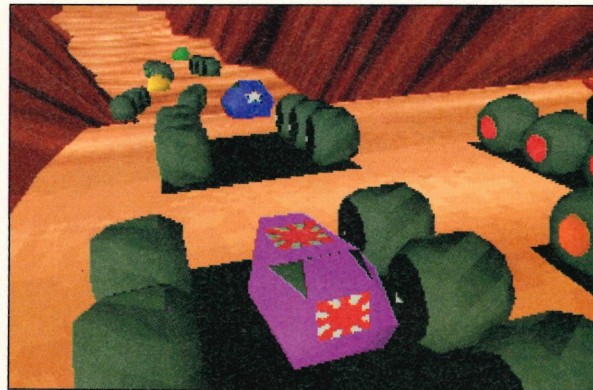
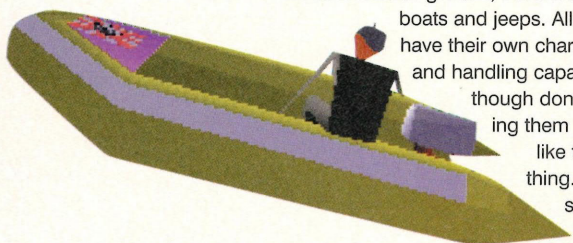
There are 18 different circuits, each designed for a specific vehicle type, including rivers, snow, roads and desert. And this being a fun-based game, you'd be correct in assuming that the racetracks include hazards such as jumps, chicanes and ramps. Coaxing your vehicle around the track can be quite tricky — hit a jump wrong and you might just end up sitting on your roof.

Visually the game is very distinctive, with bright, colourful graphics and lots of texture mapping. You'll be able to

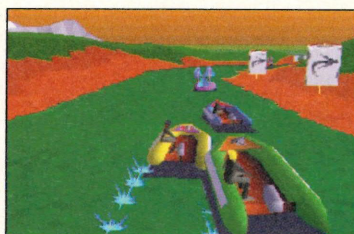
Look, no axes! ▶

view the action from a variety of angles, ranging from inside the car to in front or behind it. Apparently, you can use the front view to help you squeeze between tight gaps, although it makes steering in the right direction a bit on the difficult side.

Big Red Racing is good fun as a solo game, but is aimed mainly at the multiplayer market. It can accommodate up to six players over a network or modem, and with that many players taking part the game can be really frantic. Add to all that a rock soundtrack and some rather wacky commentary and you have a driving game that's just a little bit different from the other arcade racers on the market.



▲ You can view the action from a variety of "camera" angles, from first person to right up in the air.



▲ Planes, trains, automobiles and boats. Big Red Racing doesn't restrict you to boring old cars.



▲ There are all sorts of different track types, from asphalt to sand to water to snow.



▲ Of course, it does have its share of more traditional vehicles, such as this nice Mini.

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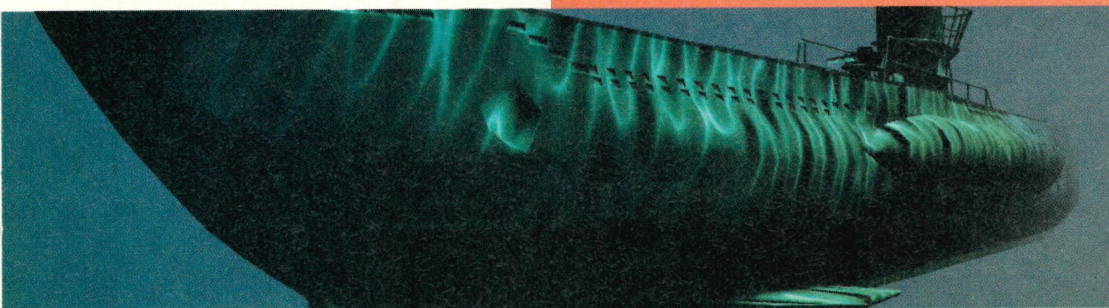
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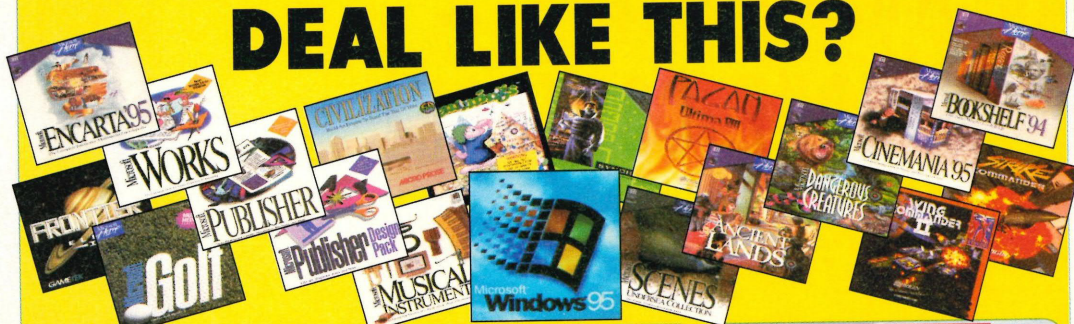
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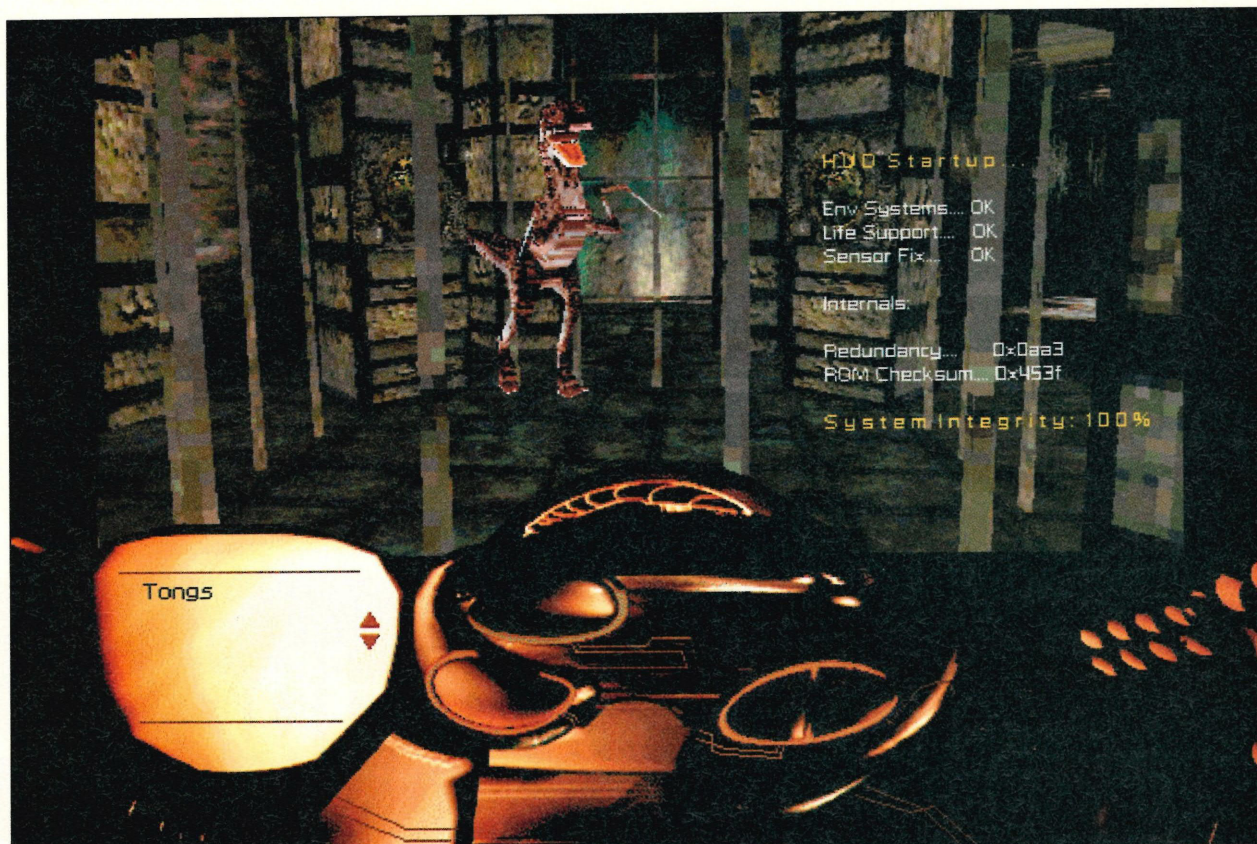
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◀ **Combat is particularly tough, because the power of the Grail makes creatures a lot less prone to dying than they would otherwise be. So, er, run away!**

Thieves like us

Tsk! A game all about the Holy Grail and not a shrubbery to be found anywhere. How disappointing. Well, not really. The lack of Python references doesn't exactly harm Azrael's Tear which is, after all, a rather nice game. Set (rather confusingly) in a huge, underground medieval temple located beneath the pleasant green hills of a near-future Scotland, it's a 3D role-playing game with an unusual plot. You play the part of a raptor — not a ferocious dinosaur beastie, but a high-tech thief who specialises in stealing valuable artefacts — and after hearing rumours of the temple you decide to investigate. On arrival you discover that the temple has remained more or less unchanged for hundreds of years. Its inhabitants, which include knights and monsters, have been kept alive by the power of the Grail, but the effects of time have mutated many of the creatures and part of the challenge is that you're never sure who to trust.

It's only a flesh wound!

Character interaction plays a large part in the game. Each character has a distinct personality and their reactions take this into account. Inevitably, you will be involved in the odd tussle, but due to the life-enhancing properties of the Grail you'll find that most of the creatures are extremely difficult to kill. Fortunately, that also means that you won't die too easily — but you can become too badly injured to continue or get yourself stuck down a pit from which

Azrael's Tear: In Progress

The Holy Grail has been sighted in Scotland. Cal Jones grabs the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch and goes in search...

Publisher: Mindscape

Contact: (01444) 246 333

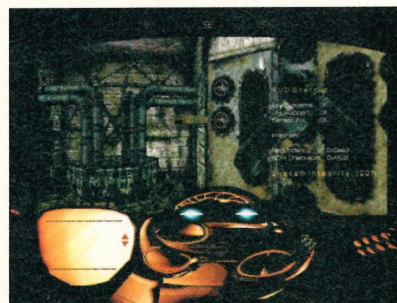
Price: TBA

Release date: January 96

you can't escape, and if that happens your game is pretty much over.

Although Azrael's Tear is only the third title from Intelligent Games, and its first attempt at a role-playing game, it's pretty damned impressive. The 3D engine is superb, allowing for full 360 degree movement as well as the ability to look up and down. Although it behaves a bit like Origin's System Shock, the controls are far simpler and this leaves you to concentrate on the business of puzzle solving and exploration rather than fumbling for the correct keys.

With its wonderful graphics, mind-bending puzzles and excellent atmosphere, Azrael's Tear looks like a winner. OK, so I always finish a preview by making a few encouraging noises, but this time I really mean it. I've played a stack-load of RPGs in my time and this one is shaping up to be a shining example of the genre. Trust me.



▲ **As a high-tech thief, you're equipped with a head-up display which keeps tabs on your health, analyses objects and checks out locations.**

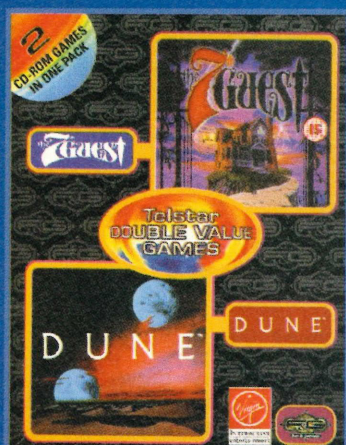


◀ **Most puzzles have an element of logic to them. To complete this one, you have to find the missing segments of the tapestry.**

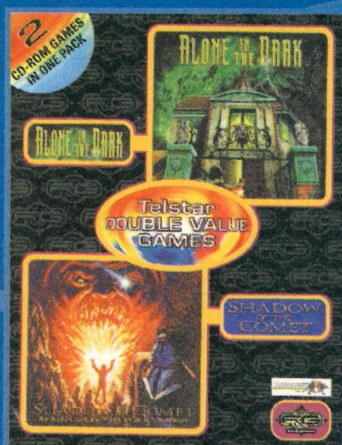
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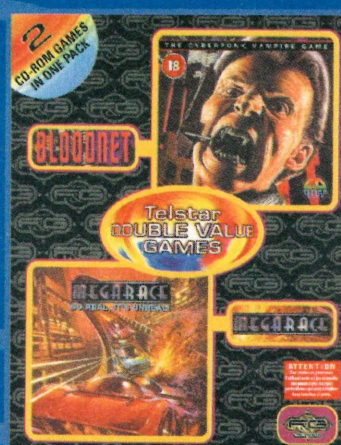
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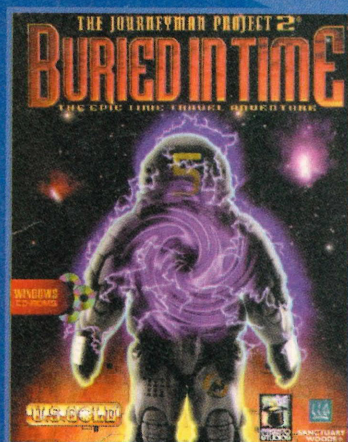
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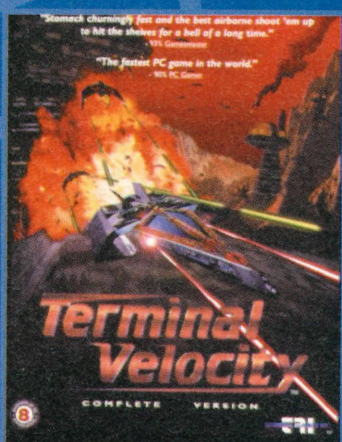
▲ **TWINPACK: Mega Ace/Bloodnet** (Cert 18) CD Telstar
Minimum requirements: 386 DX, 4Mb RAM, VGA



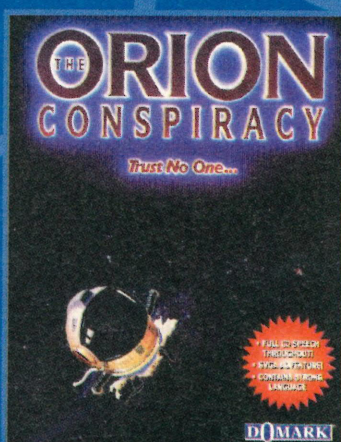
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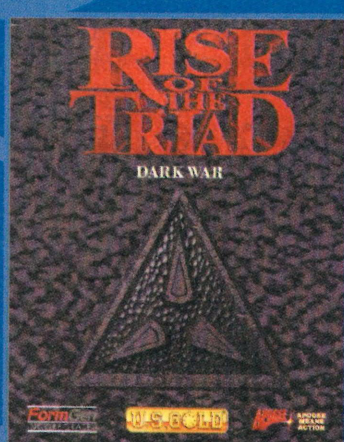
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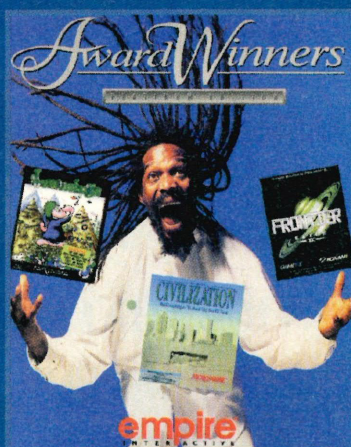
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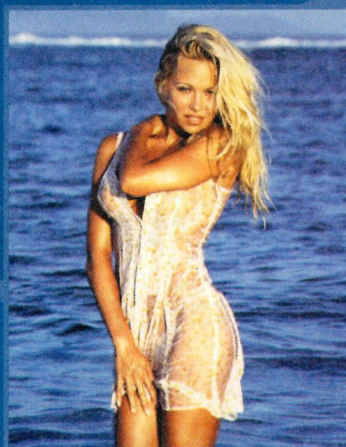


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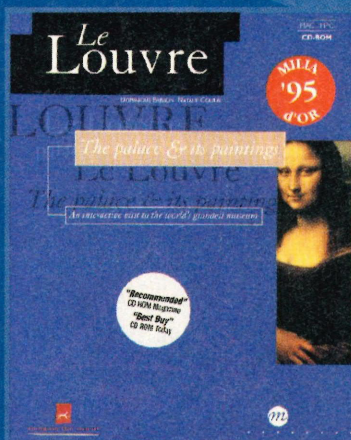
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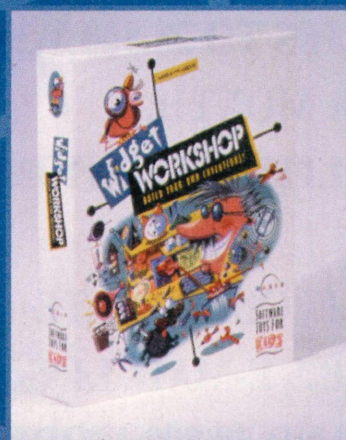
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▲ Puny, isn't it?

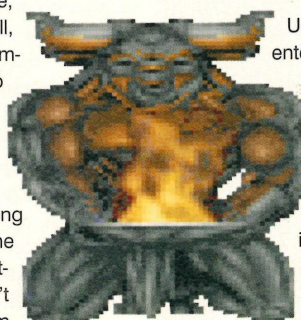


▲ It's good against these guys, though.

Hexen

Perhaps I'm a unwitting Luddite, but I'm still happy with the original Doom and, as far as I'm concerned, everything which came after can just crawl off into a corner and die. The only exception to the rule is Dark Forces, which got my vote because of my sad Star Wars fixation. Progress is fine, just so long as it's done well, but in many cases games companies have attempted to cash in on the Doom phenomenon without making any serious attempt to do anything innovative.

But Hexen has gone a long way to restoring my faith in the 3D genre. Right from the outset it's obvious that this isn't just another dressed-up Doom


CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 50MHz 486, MS DOS 5.0
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: All major soundcards


Unfortunately, as soon as you enter a new area you're usually ripped to shreds by a host of unpleasant creatures, and the whole process starts over again.

But the variety more than makes up for this very minor irritation. The first level, which is set in a courtyard, looks exceptionally good and the graphics rarely disappoint

He's battled through Doom and punished the Dark One in Heretic. Now Mark Patterson faces Hexen and runs away.

clone. Whereas its forbear, Heretic, was little more than Doom with a different set of graphics, Hexen attempts to do something a bit different, and the result is a truly excellent game.

The biggest single advantage Hexen has over other games of this type is its structure. Unlike most 3D action games where you're simply trying to get from A to B without getting sliced-up into little bits, Hexen takes a far more integrated approach. Each world is built around a central area, or hub, with all the other sections linked to it. This has allowed the level designers to run riot, putting in some really rock-hard problems which you have to solve while scurrying from one level to another.

Size is important

Hexen's size is also the source of its only problem. Trying to find a single switch in a world half the size of the original Doom can be dead frustrating. That said, once you do find it, the feeling of relief, not to mention stupidity at not finding it in the first place, is immense.

after that. From misting effects to collapsing floors and stained glass windows which explode into fragments when you hit them, the attention to detail is amazing. The resolution may not be any better than Doom's, but there's so much more variety.

Like Doom, Hexen also has that all-important scare-factor. During one level I almost jumped out of my skin when a swamp beast suddenly jumped out of the slime I was wading through and clawed my fighter to death. Play it in the dark with the sound turned up for maximum effect.

Getting into character

Unlike previous id games, Hexen gives you a choice of three characters. The warrior, as you might expect, is pretty good at slicing things up, while the magic user is physically weak, but comes armed with an arsenal of powerful weapons and spells that more than make up for his lack of physical prowess. The third character is the cleric, who falls somewhere in



▲ Those flames are a teleporter.



▲ That's Korak, the game's bad guy.



▲ He isn't Korak, he's still bad, though.

Switcheroo

Most of the puzzle solving in the game revolves around finding switches then working out what effect they've had when you activate them. Hints flash up at the top of the screen, such as "you hear the rustle of leaves" which makes it easy to deduce that you need to go back to where the trees are. But because of the size of the levels there's still plenty of wandering round to do.



Hexen has all the gore you could possibly wish for. And then some. ▼

▲ **It's dark, but unfortunately I'm not alone. Dodging monsters makes finding switches even harder.**



▲ **Even when you do get the door open, you never know what you might find...**



▲ **And your blind date for tonight is... Sharon from Scunthorpe.**

ard uses projectiles. You always start with a small and fairly pathetic weapon, and then pick up more impressive items along the way.

Some of these are located around the levels, but the fourth and most powerful weapon has to be constructed from separate pieces which you have to find first, and that's no easy task.



Mana bout the house

Instead of ammunition, weapons are powered by one of two types of mana. The blue variety gives more strength to your hacking and slashing while green boosts your missiles. So that the game doesn't become too easy, the programmers have thoughtfully placed most of the mana power-ups behind waves of monsters. So much for fair play.

The key to fighting your way through the later stages of the game lies in tracking down the three pieces of your super-weapon. Once



between the other two in terms of what he can do. He can fight well, though not quite as well as the warrior, but unlike the warrior he can use magic. His versatility makes him a good novice character, but I didn't find him quite as much fun to play as the mage or the warrior.

The game adapts itself to the different characters. The warrior can expect to be faced by a lot more combat thanks to his out-and-out scrapper nature, while the wimpy wizard benefits from more healing potions and health bonuses. Each character has his own specific weapons — the cleric favours blunt instruments, the fighter prefers blades and the wiz-

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▲ And you have chosen a date for two in the creepy London Dungeon!

equipped with it, your character transforms from puny mortal into the ultimate killing machine — but only for a short while. The drawback of these weapons is that they get through mana faster than a fat bloke gets through a doughnut. But they're worth the effort, not just because they make you the ultimate hard thing in the game, but because the visual effects you get when you use them are terrific. The cleric's super-weapon, for instance, unleashes a horde of ghosts that fly around ripping nearby monsters apart. They'll even fly through walls to get at their prey. Spectacular stuff.

Pigging out

There are plenty of useful extras too. As with Heretic, there's a morph ovum, but now you can change your enemies into pigs as well as chickens. Most useful if you run out of provisions and fancy a bacon sarnie.

Of the other goodies, there's the disc of repulsion which deflects any incoming pro-



▲ The mist effects add a nice, atmospheric touch to the proceedings.

jectiles and the flak potions which act as grenades. Best of all, however, is the minotaur. Possess the right artefact and you can summon one of these large and not terribly intelligent creatures and he'll destroy any monster foolish enough to get in the way. Fortunately, he won't attack you.

The monsters themselves are more than up to the task of taking you on. The most common are strange two-headed goblin things who exist only to die at your hand when they attempt to club you to death. From then on it gets just a wee bit more difficult, when you're confronted by teleporting, fireball-chucking wizards, gigantic alien-type critters that spit acid, laser-firing centaurs and gigantic flaming bats. New creatures are introduced in each world, but even the most dangerous pale into insignificance beside the bosses (Hexen's equivalent of Doom's cyberdemons and spider demons). Particular tactics have to be deployed in order to destroy them, from collecting a flying spell to

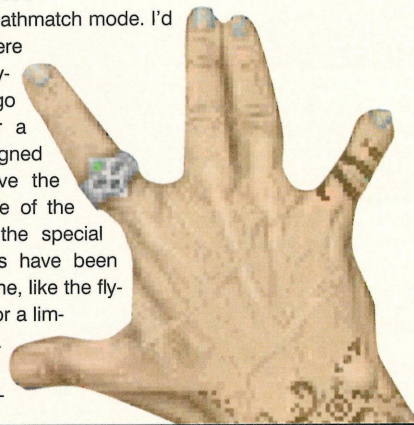


▲ I warned you about sneezing with a mouth full of mushy peas.

chasing down a dragon to deflecting the flaming rocks the head wizard hurls at you. Let's just say that defeating these big, bad nasties is not going to be very easy. Don't imagine for a moment that you'll grind them into the dust on your first attempt. You won't.

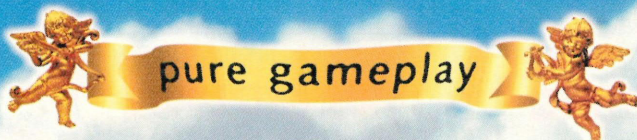
To the death...

Of course, there's a deathmatch mode. I'd complain bitterly of there wasn't. Up to four players will be able to go noggin-to-noggin over a series of specially designed levels, and you'll have the option to use any one of the three characters. All the special weapons and gadgets have been included, although some, like the flying gizmo, only work for a limited amount of time. Also on the way (or so I'm told) is an eight-



"The masterstroke is the gameplay. It's immaculate."

PC Zone, 92%



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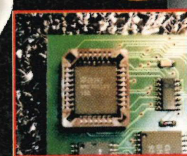
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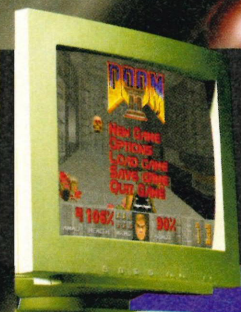
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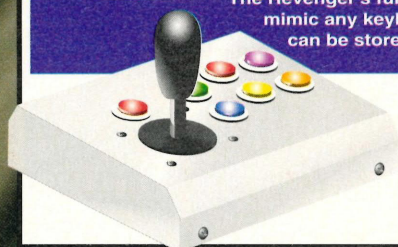


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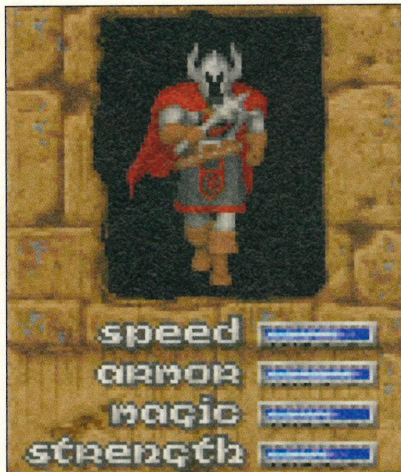
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Hero Hour...

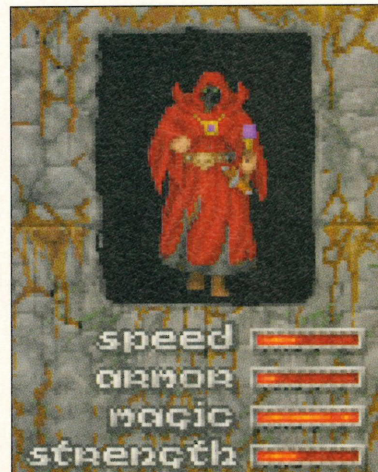
The character you select not only affects the way the game runs, but how easy it is. For example, playing as the wizard is a real nightmare to begin with. The net result of the first 10 minutes is plenty of saving and reloading while the computer resets the monsters and cleans up the greasy stain that was your character.



▲ **Warrior:** He can make mincemeat out of most monsters, but only at close range. Because of this, a certain level of caution is required to avoid getting chopped into bits every time you run into more than a couple of monsters.



▲ **Cleric:** He fights! He uses magic items! He holds a church service every Sunday and runs the local Boys' Brigade! The cleric is the best all-round character, with the most balanced attributes and the best weapons.



▲ **Wizard:** Physically this guy is the equivalent of the skinny kid in school who couldn't throw straight. But this means he's a bit brighter than his mates, so the effects of any magic items he uses is increased.



▲ **The strawberry jam gun is an essential part of your arsenal.**

player server version which should hopefully be on-line early next year. Start saving up for your modem now (and don't forget to take out a mortgage to pay for that giant phone bill).

A giant leap...

Although initially sceptical, I have to admit that Hexen is a major leap ahead of Heretic and, in my opinion, any other Doom-engine game bar Doom itself. And that includes Dark Forces. Whilst it isn't especially original in terms of its concept or visuals, it nevertheless manages to shine. At first sight it looks like extremely familiar territory, but once you've played it for a while and discovered all the nice little touches, you'll be absolutely hooked.

You could argue that the puzzles aren't particularly taxing, but make them any more complex and you're venturing dangerously



close to role-playing game territory. Hexen strikes just about the right balance between the RPG genre and the Doom-style action game. It has the the imaginative approach of the former, but without the nerdy fascination with statistics and dice rolls, coupled with the excitement and accessibility of the latter. Anyone can pick it up and play it without having to wade through a huge manual, but even though it's easy to get into, it takes time to master and is consistently challenging from start to finish.

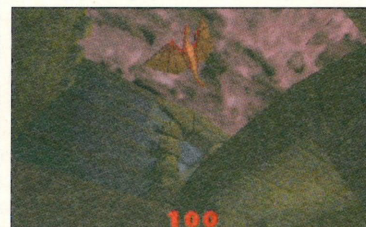
The clever, non-linear structure of the game, legions of original monsters and imaginative graphics make this one of the most outstanding titles of the 3D genre.

If you've been holding out for Quake as the rightful successor to Doom, I recommend that you give Hexen a go. It may not have Quake's graphics, but it is certainly a fantastic full stop for the Doom-alikes genre as it still looks great and best of all, it's brilliant fun.

Coming Soon...

Quake

This is the game everybody's waiting for. It marks the end of the Doom engine for id and the beginning of an altogether more advanced kind of game. Big things are being promised, but we're going to have to wait at least six months before it hits the shelves. Still, that's not too long to wait when you've got Hexen to tide you over.



▲ **The hottest title of 1996?**

PCR VERDICT

Type:.....3D action game

Publisher:.....GT Interactive

Price:.....£49.99

Contact:.....(0171) 258 3791

Don't write this off as just another Doom clone — there's a lot more to it than that. Infinitely better than Heretic.

8





▲ *IndyCar Racing II* finally brings the game up-to-date with SVGA graphics, but you'll need a Pentium.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound blaster compatible

The sequel to IndyCar Racing is finally here. Who better to review it than Jim "what does this brake thing do again?" Gillies.

Released in 1993, *IndyCar Racing* was one of the biggest selling PC games of all time and we liked it so much we gave it a 9, way back in Issue 27. Even two years on it's still a top selling budget title. Pitched more as a racing sim than an out-and-out driving game, it nevertheless managed to take the PC world by storm. Now developer Papyrus has released *IndyCar Racing II* and it looks like the company might just do it again.

With the sequel, Massachusetts-based Papyrus has addressed the deficiencies of the original as well as adding most of the features from *IndyCar* fans' wish lists. I'm not sure why anyone would want to have a random breakdown, but they've obviously been requested enough for Papyrus to include them. Turn on that particular option and you can experience an electrical fault or break a wheel bearing, for example. I find it hard enough to get round without crashing, never mind having my car die on me, but I daresay it's all in the name of authenticity.

Back on track

Several new tracks have also been added. The original *IndyCar* featured an awful lot of ovals, which is an accurate reflection of the sport but doesn't make for a terribly interesting race. All the original tracks are still there, as are the courses which were released separately on *IndyCar*'s add-on disks, but there are some nice new road

tracks to race on as well. In addition, it has been updated to reflect the 1995 season. You can race the 1995 circuit, which includes all the cars, drivers and even the billboards, so you definitely can't complain about lack of authenticity.

The most obvious change, though, is the graphics. Unlike the original, *IndyCar Racing II* boasts a glorious SVGA mode. From a purely visual point of view it should help *IndyCar Racing II* appeal to the Formula One Grand Prix 2 crowd, but the extra detail also gives a much better idea of the best position for slip streaming or taking the best line for those tricky inside corner overtaking moves. It also allows you to keep better track on the damage to your car. In the original you could only see when your tyres blew out. In *IndyCar Racing II* you can see damage to your body work and wings.

Naturally there's a rather nasty cloud to go with the SVGA lining — unless you own a Pentium you can pretty much forget it. Still, those who do own a Pentium will find that it runs at a decent rate, with very little of the jerkiness you normally get when you run a racing game in high-res mode.

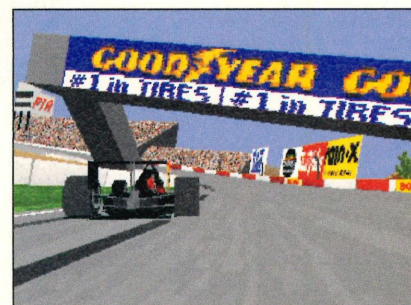
But even in VGA *IndyCar Racing II* is a big step forward, so don't be disheartened if you do own a slower machine. The cars handle a lot more realistically this time around, with better traction in hot weather; different weather conditions, (including rain which only features on road tracks, not on ovals, because in

real *IndyCar* racing there's no racing on ovals in the rain), and more wear and tear on the cars. The tyres wear out much more quickly; and if you damage one of your wings you'll lose down-force. It makes the game a hell of a lot more challenging, but it'll please the realists amongst you.

As well as this, *IndyCar Racing II* allows you to make minute adjustments to wings, engine, fuel and even the tyre compounds. The level of detail is awesome. You can muck about with the set-up to your heart's content, although I found all the technical stuff a bit daunting to begin with.

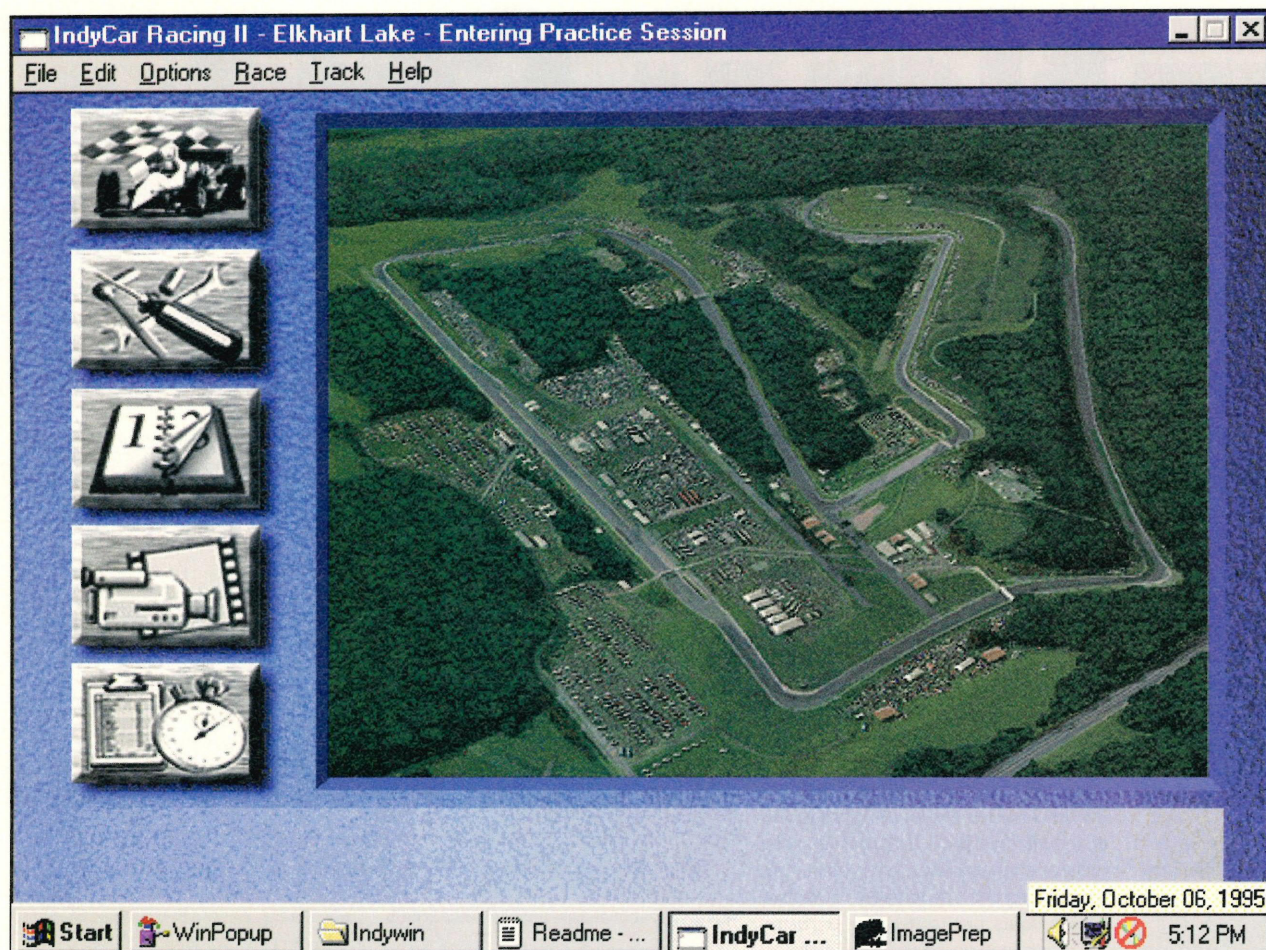
AI improvement

The other noticeable difference is the improvement of the AI in the other drivers. I found the



▲ *IndyCar Racing II*'s improved graphics should help it gain ground against the out and out racers.



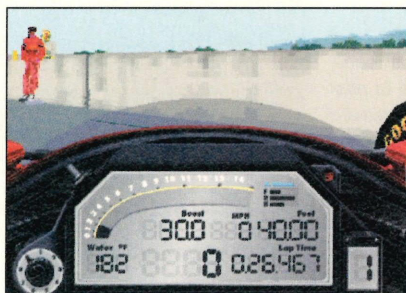


▲ **Forget about the old Windows games. Win 95 can handle DOS quality gaming.**

original game a bit irritating from time to time because they would occasionally behave erratically, but that seems to have been fixed. Unfortunately for me (not being a very good driver), the opposition seems to have got a hell of a lot tougher and more ruthless, so don't go expecting an easy ride.

Win 95 support

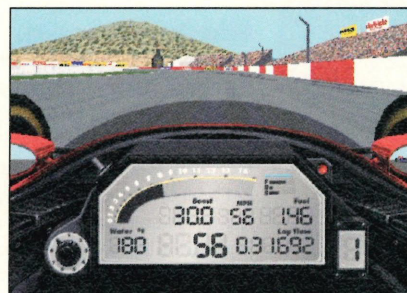
Luddites will be happy to learn that IndyCar II can run under DOS, but the CD also contains a specific Windows 95 version for those who've already upgraded. The latter has a fully customised interface, and makes full use of drop-down menus and Win 95 dialogue boxes, and I found this worked very well. Best of all, since both versions come on the same CD, there's no danger of coming home with



▲ **In high-res the pit crew look so real you can't help but want to run 'em down.**

the wrong one or having to buy a new copy if you change to Windows 95.

IndyCar Racing II is definitely the best racing simulation so far, with its incredible attention to detail and action-packed races. Arcade racing fans may find it a bit too complex, it'll delight the hardcore sim addicts no end. Brilliant.



▲ **The car's cockpit was modelled with help of real designers of real IndyCars.**



▲ **With the difficulty set right up, the computer controlled drivers are tougher than yesterday's toast.**



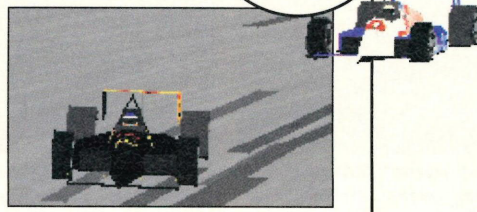
▲ **The physics and AI have been considerably improved in IndyCar Racing II — and it shows.**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Racing Sim
 Publisher:.....Virgin Interactive
 Price:£TBA
 Contact:.....(0171) 368 2255

IndyCar Racing II is no arcade racer but if you really dream of racing IndyCar then this is the closest thing to it.

9





CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486

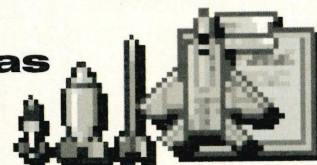
Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Navy Strike

Stormin' Rowan Jackson heads for the high seas to boldly right the worlds wrongs. He's even got full United Nations approval.



My namesake games company has not rested on its laurels. Rowan Software has resisted the temptation to bang out endless mission disks for Operation Overlord and Dawn Patrol, instead the company has done something very brave. In short, it has attempted to weave the best elements of its previous successes into the fabric of something much more ambitious, and what we have here is far from being a simple flight sim. Nor is it a standard strategy game. It's more like real life.

In Rowan's words, Navy Strike is a near future flight sim with real time strat-

And it's best to read every detail, after all the safety of the fleet is now your responsibility.

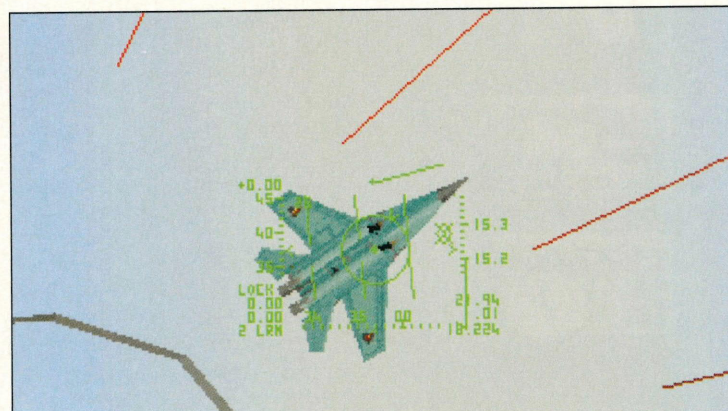
From now on there are no pre-planned missions for you to fly, you must co-ordinate everything yourself. A no fly zone must be declared and airborne early warning aircraft launched as your "eyes in the sky". In fact, mission planning is a complicated affair, but thorough tutorials make life easier. Initially it may only be necessary to intercept the odd MiG sniffing out your defences. Later on, however, things will hot up considerably. An all out attack on the carrier itself is quite likely. Also, strict rules of engagement are imposed from the start, so don't be tempted to napalm fishing boats just to see the explosion (although they do go up pretty well).

Hidden assets

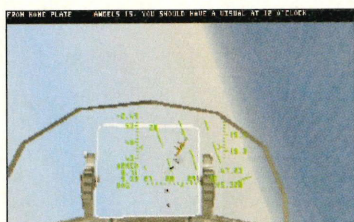
There are three different aircraft available depending on which type of mission you are planning. FA18 Hornets are your multi-role workhorses. The stealthy and agile F22 is also on hand if things get a bit sticky. And for heavy bombing, the top secret and virtually invisible AX is at your disposal — if you can find it.

You can watch an entire mission on the tactical display without taking to the air at all if you don't want to, but it's more fun to fly yourself, and you can beam into the cockpit of any aircraft at any time. The aircraft themselves look pretty snazzy — especially in SVGA, mainly because Navy Strike uses a tweaked version of the Dawn Patrol graphics engine. And as most of the furious action takes place over water, the lack of ground detail eases the strain on slower machines.

All the usual external angles are complimented by a lightning fast padlock



▲ My head swivels Exorcist-style to catch a MiG 29 in padlock view.



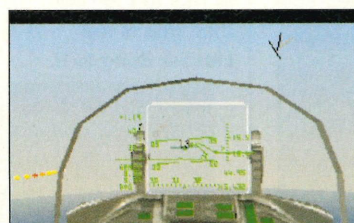
▲ He's taking hits and throwing his Maltesers out of the window in panic. The honeycomb centre plays havoc with your jets.

egy. Forget the usual format of pre-planned single missions, medals and promotions. After learning the basic flight controls you are plopped right in at the deep end as commanding officer of an entire US carrier battle group, and after a short briefing on your chosen trouble spot — Libya, the Gulf or the China Sea — it's time to take control.

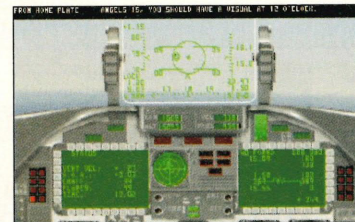
Having arrived "in theatre" there is a veritable plethora of information available to you. TV news, spies and satellite intelligence all help you gauge the level of opposition you are likely to encounter.



▲ The FA18E Hornet. Mainstay of your air wing. Looks kind-of like a cigar, er, with wings.



▲ Hot lead streaks from my muzzle towards the hapless quarry. Steady on Jackson.



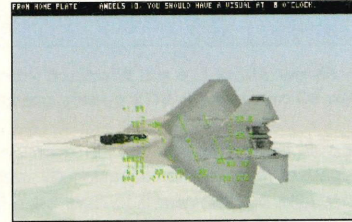
▲ I've locked up a bogey in my F18. I must not pick it until I get the order (bogey gag copyright Lolly Stick Corp.)

view. This feature really works well and is invaluable during dogfighting.

Baggy Trousers

Sound is basic but adequate. Although the cannon fire sounds more like a school ruler being boinged than an instrument of death. One nice touch is the musical change to a more sinister tune once a bogey has been identified as hostile.

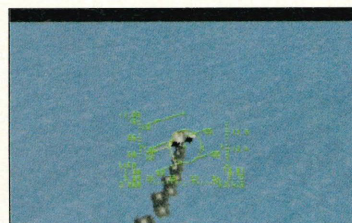
Any complaints? Well, the learning curve may be too steep for some people's liking. There are a lot of potentially



▲ The F22 is your primary interceptor. Extremely nippy and very expensive — so be careful or Uncle Sam will have you.

confusing menu icons to learn and the aircraft themselves handle rather strangely. Landing is best left to the autopilot and even in level flight a mere breath on the rudder has you wobbling.

All told, Navy Strike offers neither fabulous flight, nor stonking strategy as its main attraction. What you do get is a well thought-out and meticulously researched blend of both. You never know, if you take the time to learn it properly you might even land yourself a good job with the UN (and be shot at by allied forces instead, hurrah).



▲ Done for. Only one wing and he will never pass his MOT with emissions like that.

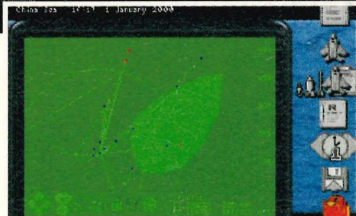


▲ Ah. So that's what Control-Q does. Still, nice day for it. Hang on, what's that hole in... aaargh!



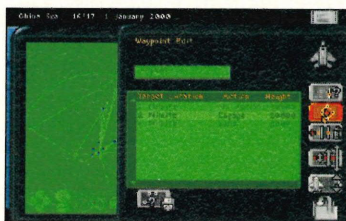
▲ **Commander in Chief (CIC).** Here you can read your messages from the powers that be.

The tactical display map. Nerve centre of your operations. ►

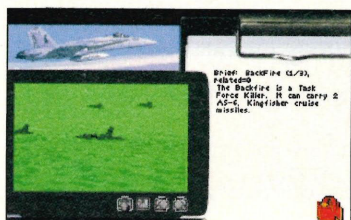


▲ **Check out the Encyclopaedia Britannica!** I'd always wondered where the Spratly Islands were.

Honest gunvor, that Libyan Airways holiday jet was just bristling with guns and bombs. What else could I do? ►



▲ **To set up a mission you must pick your way through several menu screens.**



▲ **Beware! Backfire is a task force killer.** Well, they shouldn't feed them beans on toast so often.

PCR VERDICT

Type: Flight sim

Publisher: Empire

Price: £44.99

Contact: (0181) 3437337

Just like real life.
Nobody said it
would be
easy.

7



ASCON

*The
dream
starts
here...*

Mortal Kombat 3

Someone's spiked the punch at the rugby club fancy dress party. Adam Peters tries dodging both the spikes and the punches...



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

Some marks for integrity to start with. Why? Because unlike its main rival, the Street Fighter series from Capcom, the Williams family's baby is doing it by the numbers. From Mortal Kombat 2 to Mortal Kombat 3 in just over a year, whilst Street Fighter fans have spent the past 40 months coming to terms with a whole series of prefixes and suffixes; Street Fighter 2 Turbo, Super Street Fighter 2, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, Extra Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo Special Edition, Ultra Extra Super Special Street Fighter 2 Fuel-Injected Silver Jubilee Commemorative Issue (with optional sun roof).

Those who favour the Williams-Midway arcade game can happily use such dead horse flogging tactics as evidence of their product's superiority, along with the critical response to the Mortal Kombat film (the release of which conveniently ties in with the appearance of the new game). No-one's calling it a great work of art, but at least it hasn't been basted and served with mint sauce and sago stuffing the way the Jean Claude Van Damme Street Fighter movie was.

But hold your horses (and check them for whip marks)... what did those SF2 updates offer over the original version? A handful of new characters and a couple of new special moves. And what does MK3 offer over MK2? Um, the same, actually.

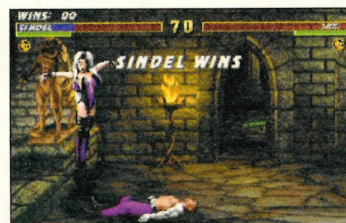
What's new, pussy-cat?

To be fair, the Mortal Kombat additions are more wide-ranging. Of the 15 playable characters in MK3, seven are newbies. As well as the usual Fatality, Babality and Friendship moves, the dexterously skilled can now choose to finish off their opponents with an Animality. The most obvious addition, though, is the inclusion of network and modem play options, which would be slightly more exciting if we hadn't come to

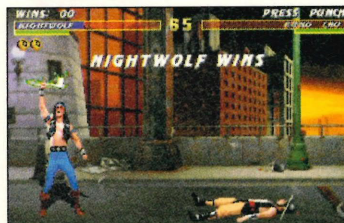


◀ Work your way through all the regular characters and you get the chance to have seven bells kicked out of you by this large centaur beastie.

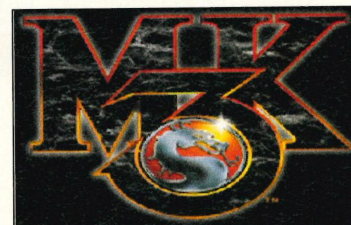
In fact, I once had a girlfriend who looked like Motaro, but she was always feeling a little hoarse. ▶



▲ New girl Sindel can kill her enemies by screaming at them. A bit like an old teacher of mine (who's up in court next week).

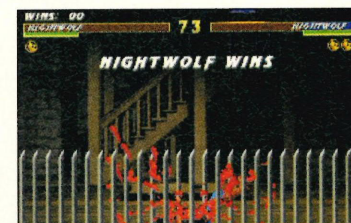
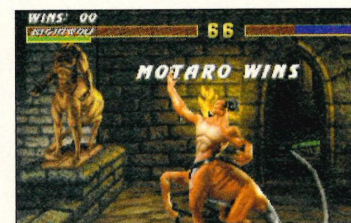


▲ Who's afraid of the big bad Nightwolf? Well, Kung Lao for one, especially as he can now see up the nostrils of the apache.



▲ And so there was a third. Star Wars and Indiana Jones both ended on a trilogy, will MK? Nah!

◀ This is the collection of hard blokes and blokesses that have the honour of kicking chunks out of each other. Sonya Blade returns from MK1, after a facelift.



▲ Yup, the old spike pit is still there and awaiting fresh victims.

◀ Hit the buttons randomly and you might just chance upon a special move. Nightwolf's axe is one of the easier to master, even though it's an awesome weapon.



▲ Kabal does a fine demolition job on the opposition. I've seen less offcuts hanging in a butcher's shop.



▲ One of new character Kabal's fatality moves consists of inflating the head of his hapless opponent until it pops. Kind-of mind-blowing don't you think.

Each character has been equipped with not one but two fatality moves. Nighthawk has this nasty light beam move. ▼



▲ As with MK2, if you don't want to destroy your enemy with a fatality move, you can humiliate them with a babality.

expect all big games to have them nowadays.

So how does MK3 differ from its predecessor in operation? Well, the special moves are as difficult as ever, with a six-button joystick or 70 WPM keyboard skills useful. The graphics are sharper, with a new selection of gloomy gothic backdrops, many of which you can interact with; punching people through the roof of the subway to continue the fight at street level, knocking them onto the railway track, et cetera. The fact that all the character information is stored on the hard drive ensures speedy play which becomes even more speedy if you turn the sound off.

Best before date

It has to be said, though, that MK3 looks dated for two reasons. Firstly, it lacks the 3D perspective flaunted by all the 'Next Generation' beat 'em ups such as Tekken, Virtua Fighter and the PC's own FX Fighter. Secondly, beat 'em ups are just so passé, darlings. Even though it has arrived at the same time as the film, MK3 isn't being greeted with anything like the same fanfare that made its pre-

decessor the best-selling game of last year. Unfortunately, although this is the best version of Mortal Kombat on the PC, it can be accused of offering too little too late. Not a bad game, but not a new one.

PCR VERDICT

Type: Beat 'em up

Publisher: GT Interactive

Price: £44.99

Contact: (0171) 2583791

Two dimensional fun for one dimensional adolescents. Good for fight junkies!

7



POLE-POSITION

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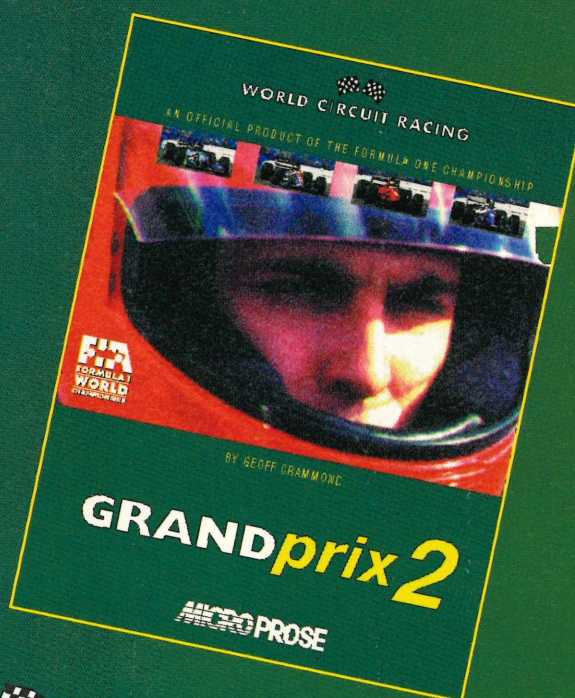
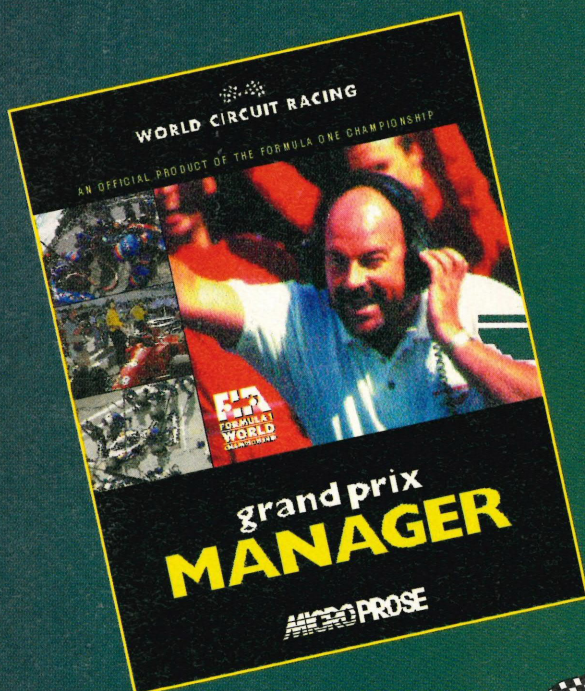
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Stonekeep

Interplay may have been one of the founders of the modern RPG, but Mark Patterson discovers that the company is still very much living in the past.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX2 66MHz

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

If that bloke who did the voice-overs for movie trailers were to describe this he'd probably say "It was a time for legends. A time where heroes were born. Stonekeep – the gaming experience of a lifetime." What he wouldn't say is this game is the let-down of a lifetime too and, once you've played it, about as welcome as his nasty pretend baritone voice.

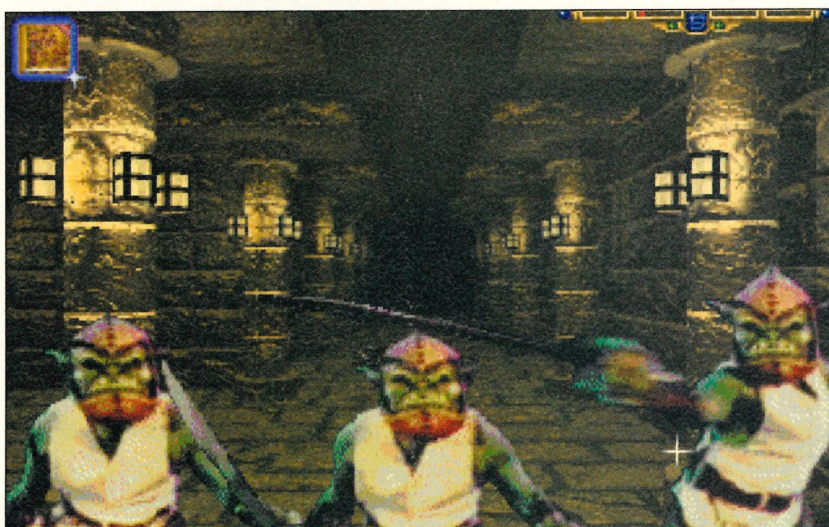
The legend behind the creation of Stonekeep is probably more dramatic than the game's good versus evil plot. The original idea came into fruition over ten years ago, the production meetings started seven years back, and two years ago most of the game was changed and more filming done because CD-ROM had become available. Then last year the lead programmer quit. It's admirable that Interplay kept going despite all this, although it begs the question, to me at least, that was it because of love of the product or because Interplay had spent so much on it that it had to make some back?

Stone dead

I always look forward to an Interplay role-playing game. I've made thousands of rare and exotic creatures extinct in the Bard's Tale games and loved every minute of it. Wasteland, an obscure Interplay Commodore 64 RPG, is possibly my all-time favourite game. So why, Interplay, can't you repeat the appeal of those old games? I'm not on a retro trip, I want to see games with loads of flashy bits to justify the insane amount of money I spent on my PC. And what do you do? You give me Stonekeep.

The best way to describe this game is Dungeon Master with FMV. It's the usual story of one man (Drake) against the forces of darkness. Again, you start off armed with nothing more than bare fists and, worryingly, the leather pants you're wearing. But that's standard role-playing for you. Take your puny human from being mere orc-fodder and turn him into an almighty killing machine.

That's the main problem with this game. Role-playing is more than just killing things. From the earliest days of pens, paper and dice



▲ Hey, it's the Bogner Regis Star Trek society convention!

that look like Kryten's head, inventiveness and puzzle solving have been essential. It's this fact that's been overlooked in Stonekeep.

The bulk of the game consists of exploration and killing. A few token puzzles have been thrown into the mix, but because of the linear nature of the game it's nearly impossible not to solve them. The way it works is that once you've explored as much of a level as possi-

ble, you've normally collected every item thanks to your inventory which has an unlimited capacity. So when you do encounter a problem, it's normally just a matter of scrolling through your items list until you find the object you need. There's no brain work involved, just simple trial and error. For example, to get out of the sewers you have to drain them. So, you find the drainage controls, but there's a bit

Mirror Man



To arm your character and check on his inventory you need to call up the mirror. This is done by clicking on the right-hand side of the screen. What you're shown is a scroll with all the objects he's carrying and a picture of the hero Drake. To give him a weapon simply drag it onto his hand. The game freezes when you do this, which makes it a little unfair on the enemy as you can swap equipment and take health potions midway through a fight. He's also



got a journal which stores the automaps and current attributes, but the programmers have made it overly complicated. To switch between Drake's attributes and those of the first NPC means flicking through four pages. Hardly a disaster, but irritating all the same. Likewise, the map pages always call up the levels in the order you found them. So to get to map eight, you've got to go through the previous seven first.



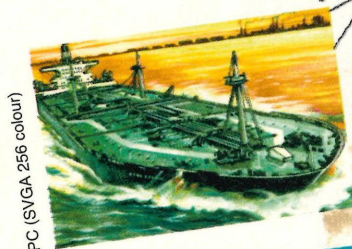
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missing. Obviously you need to find the 'make-the-drainage-button-work johnny' before you can continue. The problem is, you've explored just about everywhere. But hold on, walk through the sewers and, after much wandering about and killing things, a message flashes up saying 'Ow, my foot'. I wonder if he's stubbed his toe on something? Search the mire and you find the missing drainage control whastit. Tricky, eh?

To compound matters, there are also hidden switches. Trouble is, they appear in the same position on every wall. Whether this is due to laziness or the limitations of burst scrolling, I don't know. But then, I don't want excuses, just a better game. There are some bright points, though. The non-player characters who join your party are quite happy to chip in when you encounter a problem that suits their abilities. The dwarf, for example, will point out false walls or hidden doors, while every team member you team up with will happily join in the melee.

Again, though, another area where Stone-keep has fallen behind the times is in combat. When you're using a close range weapon such as a sword the only move you've got is a sort of prod, where you poke your victim to death. Compare that to something like Ultima Underworld or Elder Scrolls: Arena where you've got a full range of hacks, slashes and overhead biffings. Once you've tried something like that, all this prodding stuff is just worthless. Even getting new weapons doesn't add to the fun. It could be argued that because this is an RPG, combat isn't that important, but when you look at this game and consider that you do more fighting that just about anything else, well...

The action does improve later on with the introduction of magic. Once you're equipped with your magic rod, you then need to track down the various runes that create the various spells in the game. These are fun enough and it is an integral part of the game. But, like so much in here, it's been done better elsewhere, and quite some time ago too.

Bursting at the edges

The burst scrolling is another problem. Like Dungeon Master, the graphics scroll in chunks. That game was originally released over five years ago and was amazing for its time, but these days players are used to free-

dom in a game environment. Freedom to side-step attacks, look up and down, hit a run button to get away from monsters and jump over pits and flames. None of these actions are catered for. Again, there doesn't seem to be

an explanation for this. It could be down to programmers not knowing how to create a 3D environment, or that the game was so far along in development that when the technology became available that it was too late to use



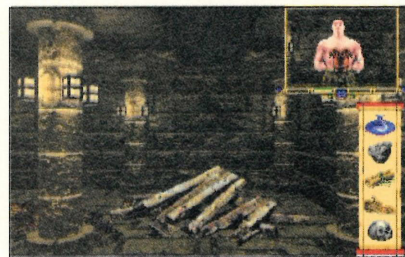
▲ You've probably guessed from looking at this bloke that he's the bad guy. If he's so evil, though, why can't he afford a tin of Brasso to polish his armour?



▲ Yeah, take that you unrealistic stumpy green thing. The hammer is a powerful weapon, but it's dead slow to use, taking two or three seconds between blows.



▲ The only way to find a hidden object is by waving your cursor maniacally over the screen.



▲ When you do find something it's best to pop it into your inventory as you'll probably need it later.



▲ Tricky problem, this. You're next to a locked door. There's a lever. Perhaps you pull it to open the door? Nah...

it. Neither of those are valid excuses though Interplay needs to move with the times because even the most ardent RPG purist is used to more than this now. Like wargames, it used to be the case that you could throw any old tat at a role-playing game fan and expect to get away with it, but those days have gone, and even the most ardent D&D freak wants a game that will make use of the Pentium sitting in their bedroom.

Compounding the disaster of burst scrolling is the graphics. Interplay was apparently quite pleased with the FMV characters which populate the game world. Well, I don't know what the game designers were thinking of, because the traditionally hand-drawn characters look far better. The FMV characters are poorly animated, invariably grainy and look like nothing more than blokes wearing rubber goblin masks.

This sounds exactly like a damning criticism of Stonekeep. Which is possibly a little harsh. It's not an utter disaster, it's simply so far behind the times that it's been hopelessly out-classed, even by games that were released several years ago. All you have to do is take one look at Hexen (also reviewed this issue) and the gulf between the eighties-style Stonekeep and the kind of game which can be created now is all too clear. That may sound like an unfair comparison, but Hexen probably contains just as much RPG gaming as Stonekeep, but contained within a significantly better game. You really don't have to look any further than that, or even compare the screen shots between the two games to see exactly the quality of software we're entitled to expect these days – playing this, on the other hand, makes you wonder why you ever bothered to upgrade your system beyond a 386.

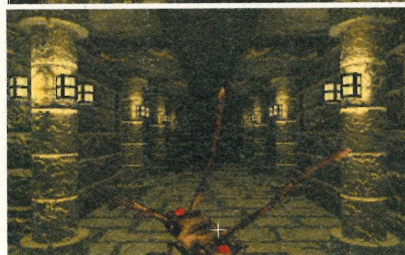
The sad old days

Had Stonekeep been released five years ago, I still reckon it would have a tough time competing. It's made all the worse for me being a fan of Interplay games since the early days when the company's games were shipped over here by Electronic Arts. Somewhere along the line Interplay has lost the plot. Whether it is now too committed to the interactive movie ethos, or old faces like Michael Stackpole have left (he could still be there for all I know), I'm not sure. But I am sure of something: if this is the best RPG that one of the most innovative companies of the 80s can come up with now, it's probably better off not doing one at all.

For all the claims made about it, Stonekeep has turned out to be surprisingly normal. It's tired, jaded and never really gets into gear no matter how much you play it. It is possibly a victim of over-development, or perhaps it was never destined to be anything other than average. Whatever the story, this is a game that had a fraught time in development and, I'm afraid, can expect a tough time at the hands of even the fairest reviewers. It's one step away from a total disaster which is only saved by a few of the real RPG clichés which have served so many games in the past. Whether you're an experienced RPGer or a newcomer to the genre, there are better examples out there, many of them at a budget price now.



▲ Oil grenades feature in your arsenal early on. They're best saved for use against groups of enemies and not solitary insects such as this.



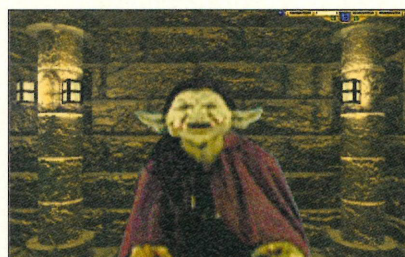
◀ We're not quite sure if this is supposed to be a spider or some kind of ant throwback to Interplay's classic *It Came From The Desert*.



▲ This light is your first-level guide.



▲ Bones, such as the pile here, are good for practising your sword play on. This boosts your skills making you more accurate and deadly.



▲ This failed Yoda look-a-like plagues you throughout the game. And he's got a bloody annoying voice.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Role playing game
 Publisher:Interplay
 Price:£44.99
 Contact:.....(0181) 960 2255

Ten years in development?
 Wasn't worth it, mate.

5



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Witchaven

The search for a worthy successor to Doom goes on: while the world holds its breath for the arrival of Quake (it's proper follow-up), we must make do with the plethora of wannabes that are lining up around the block to take a shot at the crown.

Thus Witchaven, which in fact bears a closer resemblance to Raven's Heretic (Hexen — the sequel to Heretic — is reviewed on page 60) in that it is a fantasy-based affair, with swords and spells taking the place of chain-saws and rocket launchers. There is a plot (isn't there always?) about some witches who have cast a spell on the world, but as usual

Cast into the deepest, darkest pits of destruction, a lone warrior must battle his way through the forces of evil and save the world. Oh no, not again, says Pat Fox.

this is entirely incidental to the point of the game —so collect weapons, find keys, and most importantly, kill everything that moves.

So far, so Doom. However, the programmers have made a passing attempt to give the game a little more complexity. As you progress you collect experience points which, when you have enough, will increase your stamina and resistance to injury, and your skill with weapons. You can also look up and down, jump, crouch and fly, but that's about as far as it goes — there's no character interaction, so this doesn't really qualify as an RPG.

Let's not be too harsh, though. When it comes down to it, this is still a good game. The graphics are great, with highly detailed texture mapping which looks particularly effective in SVGA mode (on a Pentium, naturally). If anything, the graphics engine most resembles that of Dark Forces,

Call me pedantic, but why doesn't he topple over?



◀ How unpleasant, a short fat woman with no skin on her head. That's your Mum, that is.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, MSDOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Most major sound cards

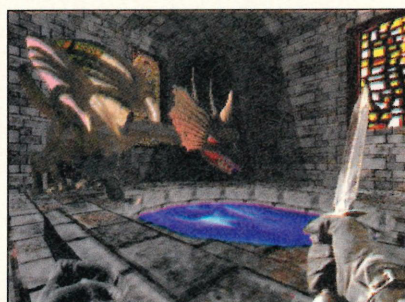
even down to the map-overlaid-on-the-screen effect. The monsters are nicely drawn, but not really as scary-looking as they might be — the early ones in particular are less frightening than they are mirth-inducing.

The level design is particularly attractive, again bearing more resemblance to the expansive architecture of Dark Forces than the often claustrophobic complexity of Doom.

There are some nice touches, too: the way some monsters act surprised and have to pick up their weapons when you enter the room, the fact that your arrows will stick in the wall if you miss your target, or how standing in a pit of boiling lava will actually affect the meanies as badly as it does you.

At the end of the day Witchaven is a competently-produced, good-looking and fun game, which is let down only slightly by its lack of originality. But there is an element of addictiveness here; that old feeling of 'I wonder what's round the next corner?' which should keep you playing for some time.

◀ You can't even take a stroll in the garden in peace these days. Tsk.



▲ Cor, blimey, you should try some Listerine, matey.



▲ Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Fantasy Doom clone

Publisher:US Gold

Price:£39.99

Contact:(0121) 6061800

Yes it's another Doom clone. No it's not new or original, but it is still a good crack.

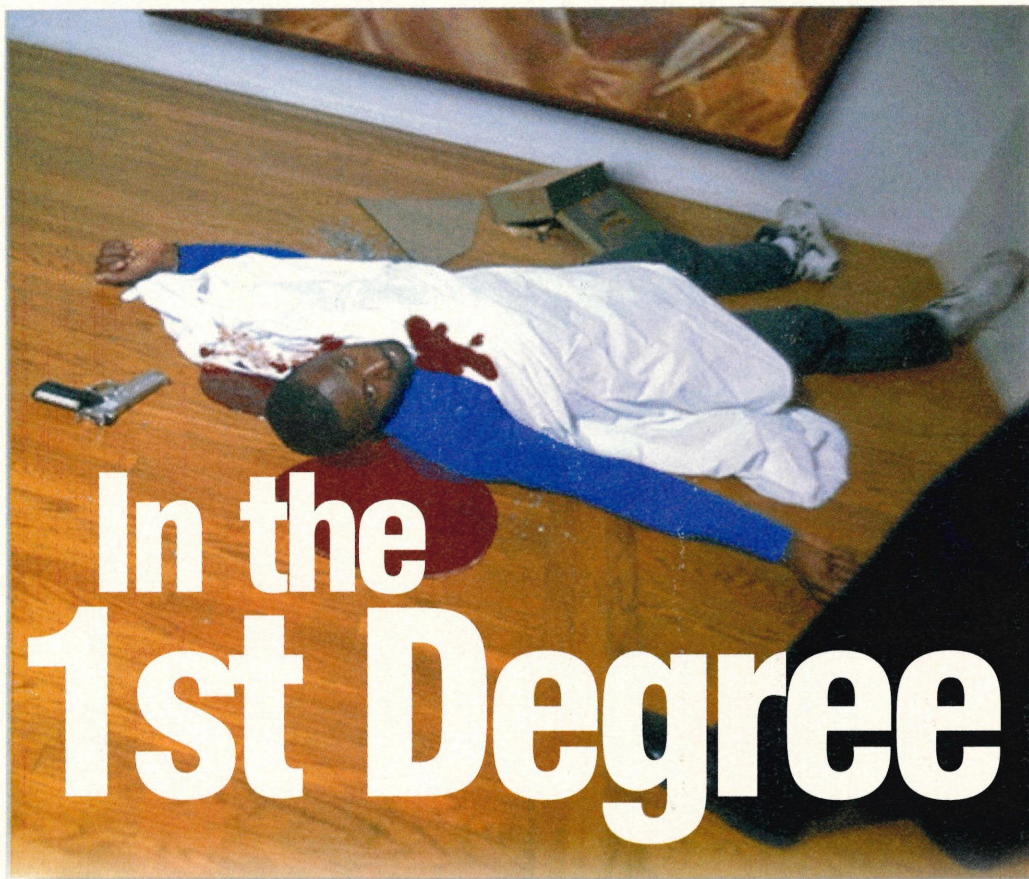
7



◀ Give 'im a bit of mace in the face, that'll sort 'im out rightly.

YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE...





In the 1st Degree



Here's a topical game. With the infamous OJ Simpson trial still fresh in everyone's minds, Broderbund has released an interactive courtroom drama. Apparently it's been two years in the making, but it shows pretty good tim-

If you ever wondered what it felt like to be Marcia Clark, now's your chance to find out. Gordon Houghton pleads insanity.

ing even so. It also marks a small step forward in the use of video technology.

In the 1st Degree puts you in the shoes of state prosecutor, Sterling Granger. Your mission is to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that James Tobin, an artist, is guilty of murder in the first degree of his business partner, Zachary Barnes.

There's a wide variety of photographic, documentary and video evidence available, and you can personally grill the witnesses to add that final touch to your case.

Once you've gathered all the information you need, there's a grueling question-and-answer session in court. Five outcomes are possible.

The jury can find Tobin guilty of murder in the first (premeditated) or second (unpremeditated) degree, convict him of manslaughter, or acquit him. Additionally, if you're a complete klutz and

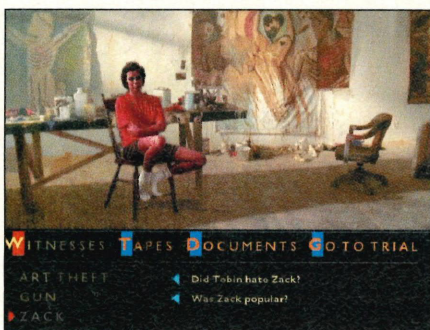
don't ask any pertinent questions, the defence will move successfully for a mistrial.

From the opening scenes to the final verdicts, this is an impressively presented game. Video sequences are pasted onto real life backgrounds to provide a strong sense of realism, and the use of cut-scenes to move the action along is excellent. All the evidence looks credible, with documents that appear photocopied, gruesome photographs and detailed dossiers. The interface is so intuitive you wonder why the publisher bothered with instructions at all.

If the action itself could match the superlative presentation, this would be one of the games of the year. As it is, there's not enough variety to keep you coming back for more.

Mind you, there's a definite challenge here which anyone who loves a mystery will enjoy, but once you've been through the whole process once, repeated plays just aren't gripping enough.

In the 1st Degree takes you from the moment the crime was committed through to the final verdict. The first you hear about the murder is during a TV newscast.



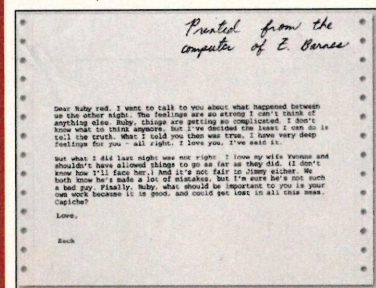
WITNESSES TAPES DOCUMENTS GO TO TRIAL

ART THEFT
GUN
ZACK

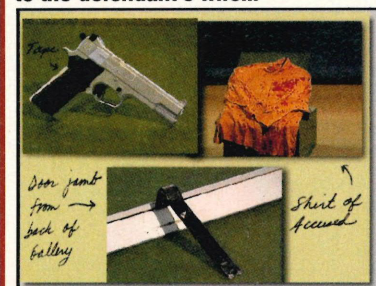
Did Tobin hate Zack?
Was Zack popular?

The Evidence...

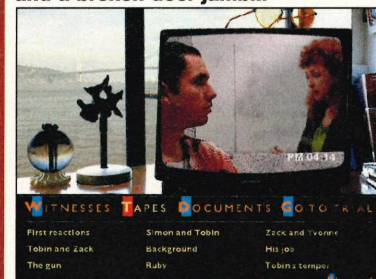
The case against James Tobin seems irrefutable. A whole CD's worth of incriminating evidence links him to the murder of Zachary Barnes. These are just some of the examples.



The evidence is available in several forms, from documents such as this love letter written by the victim to the defendant's wife...



...through damning photographs like this, showing the murder weapon, the defendant's bloody shirt and a broken door jamb...



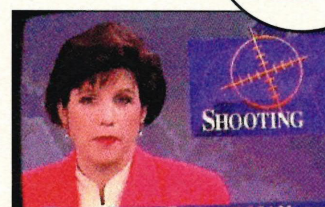
...to information you and your office collect by interviewing the witnesses directly. All you have to do is convince the jury.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Murder mystery
Publisher:Broderbund
Price:£45.00
Contact:(01753) 620909

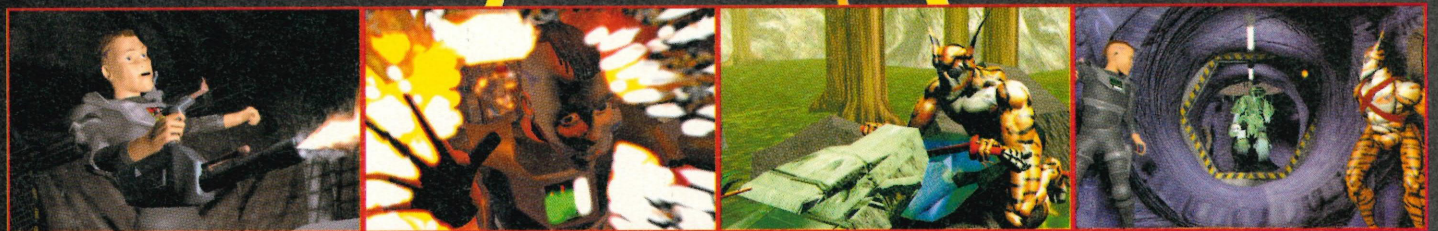
The presentation is superb, but there's too little interaction and the trial scenes are too linear.

7



YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE THE EXPERIENCE THAT IS

ALIEN ODYSSEY



GET IT FROM SOFTWARE STORES NOW

Hints, tips and prizes available on **0891 244424**. Calls cost 39p per min cheap rate, 49p per min all other times. Max cost £3.00.

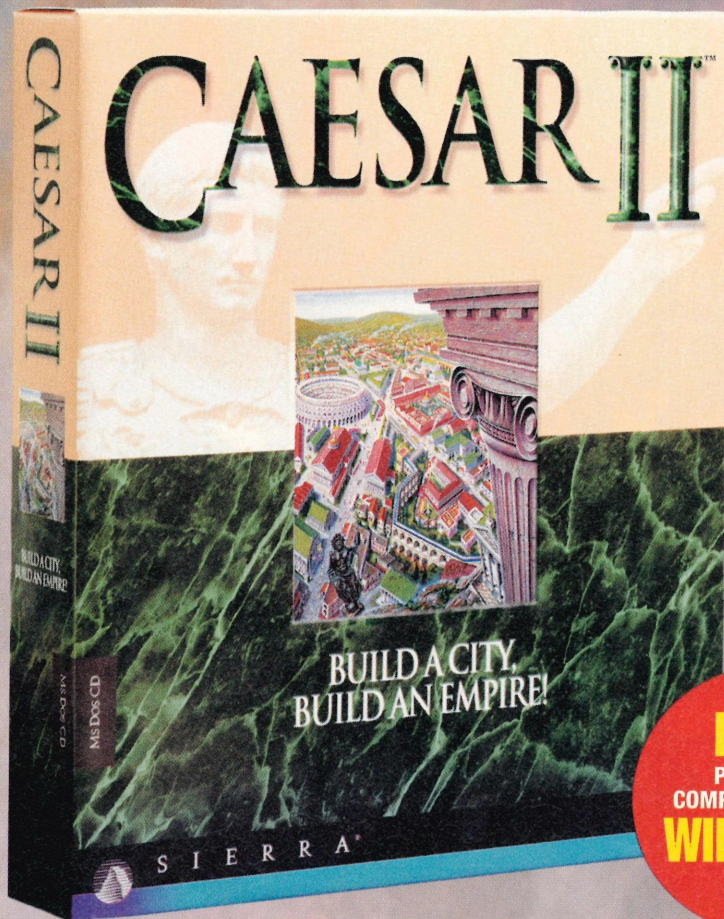


PC CD-ROM



PHILIPS

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In The Top 5 Games
for Fall 1995...

Computer Gaming World

"...Can't stop playing...!
A solid hit!"

Strategy Plus

"...High on the
must-play list.!"

PC Gamer

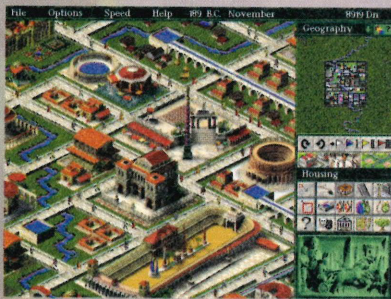
A
DOS
PROGRAM
COMPATIBLE WITH
WINDOWS
95

You are the Governor of a Roman province whose capital city (if you build it well!) will become the talk of the Empire. Choose from dozens of authentic structures – temples, aqueducts, bath houses, even the Circus Maximus – and watch your city spring to life.

Develop resources, open trade routes and promotion will soon follow.

Then expand your territories and move up the ranks. Your challenge – to rise and become the next Caesar – while confronting upstart Gauls, invading barbarians and restless citizens who threaten your eternal cities.

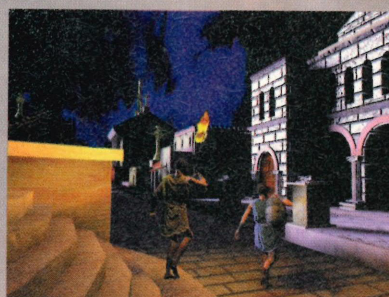
A fabulous game that mixes strategy, true historical facts, wargame and town simulation.



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routes, industries, and fortifications.



Exquisite 3-D rendered animations
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S I E R R A®

Alien Odyssey



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486 DX2 66, 2x CD Drive

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster or Compat.

The last time Argonaut and Philips teamed up they brought us the brilliant beat 'em up, FX Fighter (rated 9, issue 46) solid, well designed gameplay garnished with stunning graphics. With Alien Odyssey the garnish is even tastier, but someone forgot to include anything to sink your teeth into.

You take the role of Psaph, who becomes stranded on the planet Betan after a crash landing and then befriend by Gaan, a member of an oppressed race, who you then agree to help. The game is broken up into four sections — two Chaos Control type shoot 'em ups and two Alone in the Dark style 3D sections.

Off the rails

The two 'on the rails' sections suffer from the usual problem — although they look very nice you're only given enough control to distract you. Move the cursor and shoot (with the addition of shields and rotate) to get to the next section. Seen in the context of the main part of the game the shoot 'em up sections look hastily tacked on and if you fail you feel annoyed, instead of challenged.

The majority of the action takes place in the two Alone in the Dark type sections as you infiltrate the communications bunker and the

Nice when you can actually see who's shooting at you for a change. ▼

The Planet Betan needed a hero and it got Jim Gillies. Oh dear!



◀ You missed me you spike ball robot thing. Nice sparkling bits though.

armoury. The characters are well animated and the backgrounds are spectacular, but that only highlights the game's defects.

In the 3D sections you have to do the usual round of killing things and solving puzzles, but it all seems curiously empty. It's hard to escape the feeling that everyone was leaving for the night and that if you waited just a little longer then you could have done things in peace. Too many of the puzzles are completely arbitrary — a Sunday paper's brain teaser

wouldn't have seemed out of place. If those had been the only defects then Alien Odyssey's looks would still have justified an above average score.

The game's worst crime is the flaky camera angles. After about half an hour of playing you get very annoyed when you enter a room and come under fire from an enemy you can't see. With more thought given to the camera positions it would have been above average, but in the end it just annoyed me.



▲ The on the rails section looks nice and, for what it is, it actually plays rather well.

◀ "That's why I fell for the leader of the pack" How can you resist that lustrous body armour?

PCR VERDICT

Type:.....Action/Adventure

Publisher:.....Philips Media

Price:.....£44.99

Contact:.....(0171) 911 3000

Despite the nice graphics the gameplay just doesn't grab and the camera angles ruin what's left.

6





Battle Isle 3: Shadow of the Emperor

▲ **Campaign mode is for solo players only. It unfolds like a story, with a spoken introduction and video updates on your progress.**

You don't have to be a nerd to enjoy wargames, but it helps. This might have been true five years ago, but the era of the anorak-wearing hex-fiend is over. CD-ROM has given programmers the chance to mix and match game genres, and in this third instalment in the Battle Isle series Blue Byte has produced a wargame with arcade ambitions.

Like its predecessors, Shadow of the Emperor (SOE) remains faithful to hexagonal landscapes and mind-numbing statistics, and combines a nicely graded one-player challenge with multi-player missions. However, it goes one step further with over an hour of



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, Windows 3.11

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comps

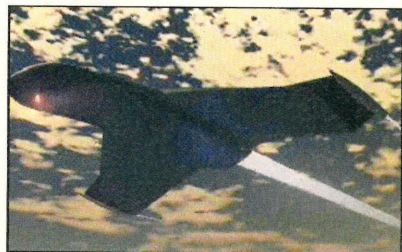
wargaming skills: precise pre-battle analysis, tactical genius and forward planning. More specifically, you face a series of missions the success of which depends on your ability to build, fuel and maintain units, develop elite troops, construct defences, establish supply lines and so on.

There are now three games in Blue Byte's long-running Battle Isle series. Thankfully, there's only one Gordon Houghton...

video sequences and digitised speech, including a lengthy opening story, mission briefings and encounters with locals. There's even a 3D representation of every battle you fight.

Empire-building

Don't put your anorak back in the closet just yet, though — this isn't strategy for softies. Your aim is to establish a new empire on the moon of Chromos using the traditional trio of



There are three different types of game. Campaign mode takes you through 20 maps to victory, with a strong storyline holding the action together. If you don't fancy a long haul you can select individual missions: 20 in one-player mode, another 12 for up to six participants, and eight tutorials. A password system prevents you from trying too much too soon. Finally, there's network mode, which allows up to six people to forge alliances and destroy their enemies in a quest for world domination.

Once you've decided on the game style, you choose one of three difficulty levels, read as much of the on-line help as you like and get ready for battle.

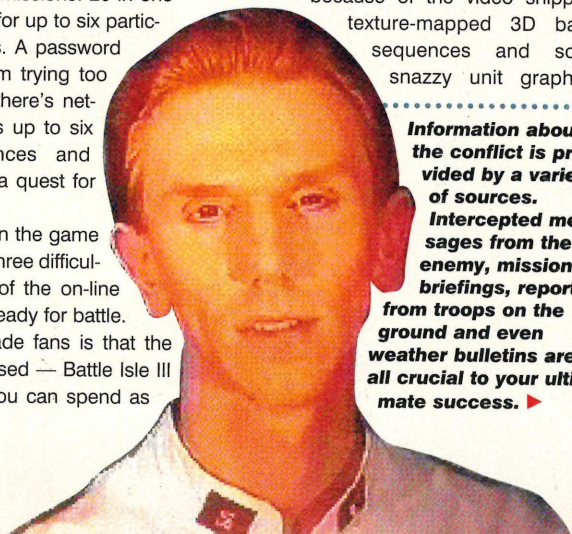
The bad news for arcade fans is that the action is primarily turn-based — Battle Isle III is a wargame, after all. You can spend as

Three excuses for a good fight

All three Battle Isle games share the same principle: to make wargaming more accessible. They supplement the traditionalists' hex-based landscape and heavy tactical decisions with good graphics, well-balanced difficulty, a sci-fi plot and compelling two-player action. They've been pretty successful in wargame terms — the first two instalments sold 165,000 copies. The series reflects the increasing demands made on hardware, too. When the original Battle Isle was released in 1991 it could be played from floppies on a low-end PC; its successor ran best in SVGA mode on a 386. To get the most from Shadow of the Emperor you really need a Pentium, Windows 95 and an AVI Accelerator card.

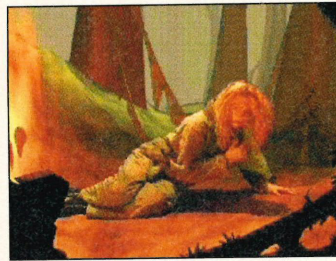
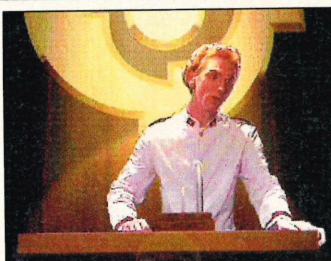
much time as you like selecting units and telling them what to do, but then you have to hand control over to your opponent and hope you've made the right moves. Even so, because of the video snippets, texture-mapped 3D battle sequences and some snazzy unit graphics,

Information about the conflict is provided by a variety of sources. Intercepted messages from the enemy, mission briefings, reports from troops on the ground and even weather bulletins are all crucial to your ultimate success. ▶



The story do far...

Twenty years on from a hard-won peace, the Drulls and the Kais on planet Chromos are at war again. It all began when Drull leader Ben Haris called Kai representative Caro some nasty names in the Chromos Parliament. Fuming, she zipped off to her plane and headed for home. On the way back, a violent storm trashed the transport and tossed Caro onto a hillside close to the retreat of the ancient Drullian Emperors. Stumbling into a cave, Caro has a psychedelic encounter with legendary emperor Punt Vassius, and with his assistance vows to take revenge on the Drull scum.



this process is actually much less tedious than you might expect.

There's plenty more good news, too. The interface consists of windows that can be shifted around and resized, along with a whole series of icon-based menus which make the normally bewildering process of making decisions a lot simpler. These are welcome features, since you have 64 different types of unit to cope with and can manoeuvre up to 400 of them simultaneously on the map.

If this kind of complexity frightens you, you won't want to hear how weather, terrain, unit efficiency and changing mission objectives all have a bearing on your decisions, too.

Mass appeal?

If you're a wargame addict you've probably already played and enjoyed the first two Battle Isle instalments. If so, you'll be happy to know that this version reuses all the elements which made its predecessors so successful, simplifies the command structure, provides an hour's worth of video entertainment and gives you a very meaty challenge.

If you're not a wargame fan, Battle Isle III just might convert you. It does have a few drawbacks, including functional map graphics, a slightly expensive price tag and a structure which works against the excitement you normally expect from a game. It's also a punishingly slow and annoying experience if you only have the minimum spec machine.

Take a look at the game anyway. Battle Isle III has all the depth and tactical challenge of a traditional wargame, but its CD format gives it a new dimension. Recommended.

MAP WINDOW

A close-up view of the action.

OVERVIEW WINDOW

A view of the entire mission map.

UNIT INFO ANIMATION (UIA) WINDOW

A 3D representation of the unit selected, with very detailed info.



BRIEF INFO WINDOW

Summarises the most important facts about units, buildings and terrain.

STATISTICS WINDOW

Shows information on units, energy supplies,

ALTERNATIVELY

BATTLE ISLE 93

Issue: 21

Rated: 7

Price: £25.95

As its name suggests this was released a couple of years ago and was basically a sci-fi update of the original Battle Isle, with 24 new one-player levels and eight two-player games. Good value for money.

METAL MARINES

Issue: 41

Rated: 8

Price: £34.99

A fiendishly addictive and very user-friendly variant on the pen-and-paper game Battleships, this also features a split-screen display, resizable windows and two-player mode.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Wargame

Publisher:Blue Byte

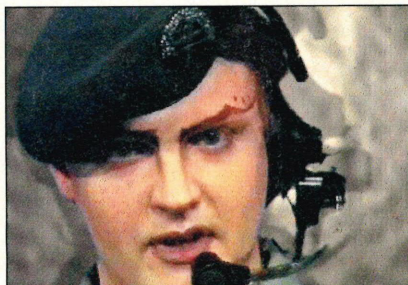
Price:£44.99

Contact:.....(01604) 232 200

An impressively presented wargame that deserves mainstream appeal.

7

▲ Battle Isle III's main screen gives you movable and rescalable windows, a bank of control icons and masses of battle-field data. If you have the right hardware and software, you can make your moves, run animations and watch videos all at once.



THE WORD 'TAXI' MAY BE YOUR LAST

ROAD WARRIOR

QUARANTINE II

THE SEQUEL TO THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED *QUARANTINE*.



GAMETEK

Gametek UK Limited, 258 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4DX, United Kingdom.

Werewolf vs Comanche

Does Novalogic's latest serve up a feast of heliborne excitement, or just hair of the dog? Rowan Jackson tucks in.

Beautiful rolling countryside in maximum detail. Plenty of time to enjoy it too before the next frame gets drawn. ▶



Toasted tanks. Translucent smoke is a new feature of Comanche 2. ▼



Anyone who played the original Comanche Maximum Overkill will be familiar with the style of this latest offering from Novalogic. The graphics are of the revolutionary (a couple of years ago), Voxel space variety. You either love them or hate them, mainly depending on whether or not you own a Pentium. Gameplay in single player mode follows a familiar pattern. Gentle training scenarios are followed by tricky and ultimately down right suicidal missions deep into enemy territory. To complete your objectives you must destroy specific targets using the assorted weapons of mass destruction at your disposal. Adopt the old "If it moves, bomb it" philosophy and you'll do just fine.

Flying the helicopters on offer, either the American AH66 Comanche or the Russian KA50 Werewolf, is a doddle. Despite lengthy manuals and full Thrustmaster joystick support, you just yank your stick and go. It's not even necessary to land again after completing your mission. We're talking arcade rather than simulator here.

Sound is a strong point throughout both games. Sampled speech is here in abundance and doesn't seem to slow things down. I found the female damage warning voice extremely fetching, in fact well worth getting shot

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 486DX, MS DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

It's payback time in SAM valley. I hope they've all got protected no-claims bonuses. ▶

down for. Explosions and other assorted sounds of mayhem are also faithfully reproduced and best enjoyed by whacking up your sound to full volume.

Network marketing

But this product is not just about wasting computer generated conscripts or wringing another forty quid out of die-hard Comanche fans. Its true "Raison d'être" if we are to believe Novalogic, centres on the multiplayer options. Included in the box are two separate games on two CDs, Werewolf and Comanche 2.0. The idea is that you can link up your computer to your friends' without having to buy two copies. Provision is also made for modem and network play. Even though this is a neat idea, in practice both products play almost identically. Even playing against real people cannot hide the fact that these games are old in concept. There are other titles already available (Descent and Doom for example), which offer smoother, more thrilling action. Also if you want to link them up, your friends probably



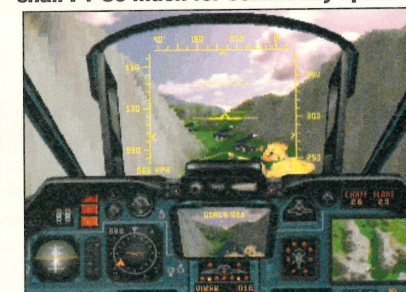
▲ Just popped round to the neighbours' house to borrow a cup of sugar.



▲ If that's the way you want it, meet my little friends.



▲ Ouch! So I'll take that as a no then shall I? So much for community spirit.



PCR VERDICT

Type:.....Flight Sim

Publisher:.....Novalogic

Price:.....£39.99

Contact:.....(0171) 607 9707

If you love helicopters and have two Pentiums at home, this could be the game for you.

6



The Riddle of Master Lu



Cal Jones is something of an oddity herself, so who better to review this weird and wonderful game?



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486SX, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comp.

Robert Ripley was a grade-A train-spotter, who scoured the globe for strange items to display in his museums, which he dubbed "Odditoriums". Whilst the authenticity of many of the exhibits is questionable, the man himself was real, and *The Riddle of Master Lu* is the first of a series of adventures based on him, and his Indiana Jones-style exploits. Although this particular yarn is a piece of genuine fiction, it's good fun in a Boys' Own kind of way.

Set in 1936, the plot has Ripley searching for the answer to a 2,000 year old mystery, a quest which takes him to China, Pomerania, Easter Island and Tibet. Not only must he solve the riddle, but he must also collect exhibits for his Odditorium to avoid bankruptcy. It's a difficult task, given that most of the game's puzzles are not so much fiendish as truly brutal.

Lu who?

This is not a beginners' adventure by any stretch of the imagination. You need a degree in lateral thinking and the inventiveness of McGyver to solve even the earliest puzzles. Once you get into the swing of things the answers come more naturally, but it remains extremely challenging right up until the end. This, and the fact that it's a big game anyway, means that you won't finish it in a weekend. You'll get your money's worth out of it.

The presentation is exemplary. It's not often that you find crystal clear speech, a friendly interface and stunning visuals all in one game.



▲ **Close-up shots appear at key moments for cinematic effect. Since the acting is quite good (for once), these work well.**

Rendered backgrounds and digitised characters — nothing new, perhaps. But unlike other games which use this technique, the characters have been "touched down" so don't look like they're superimposed. ►

A text option would have been useful for the hard of hearing and those playing in noisy environments, but other than that it's hard to find a fault.

I'd recommend this to anyone who enjoys a challenge. The toughness of the puzzles could be construed as a flaw, but my only (grudging) complaint is that some of the conversations are overly lengthy. Beyond that, this is a fine adventure which is as hard on the brain as it is easy on the eye.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Adventure

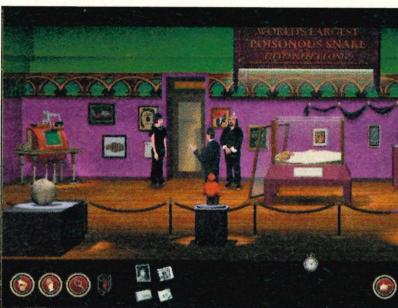
Publisher:US Gold

Price:£39.99

Contact:(0121) 606 1800

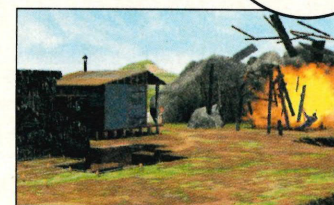
A bit on the tough side, but well worth the effort.

8



▲ **The tale begins inside Ripley's original Odditorium, and all the exhibits in it are actually based on the real thing. Saves having to go and see them.**

◀ **Ripley's girlfriend, Mei Chen, is a bilingual kung-fu expert. Handy, really.**

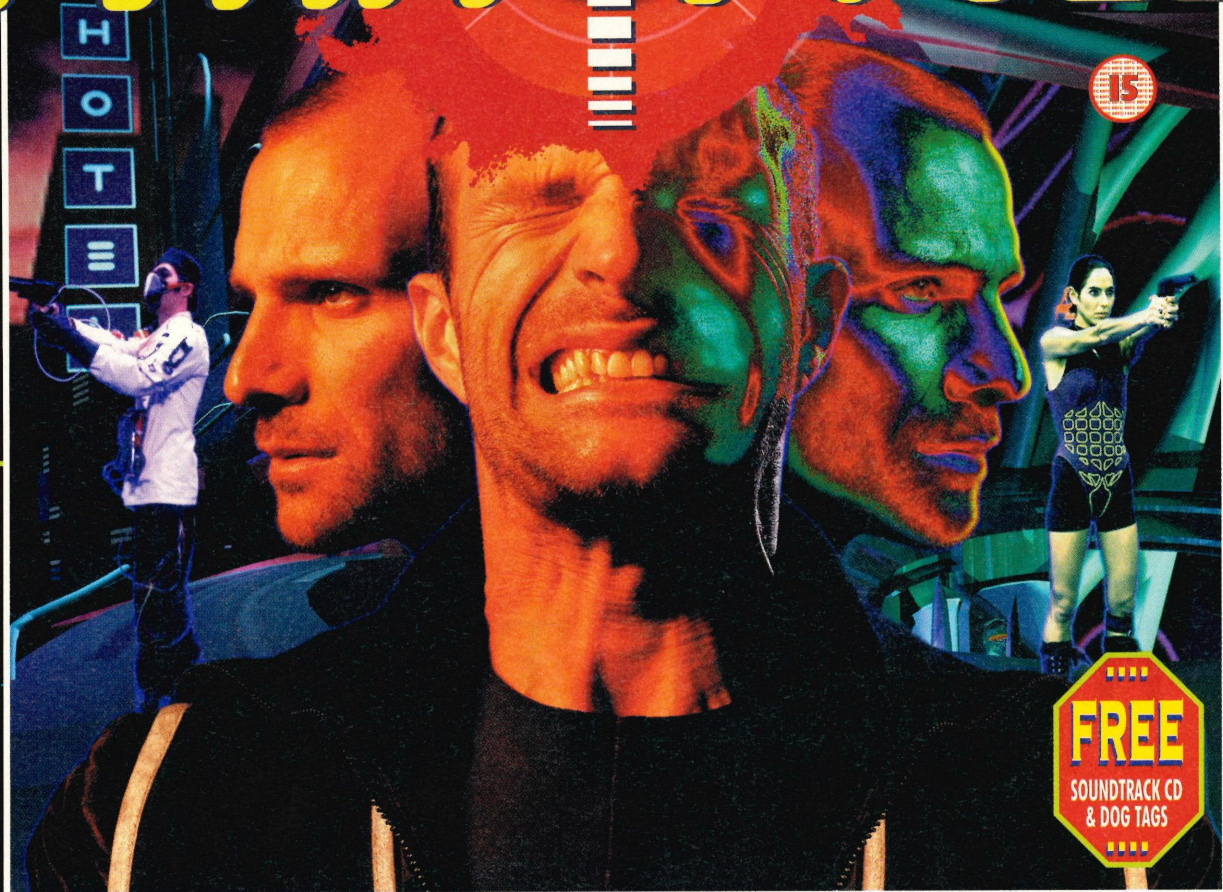


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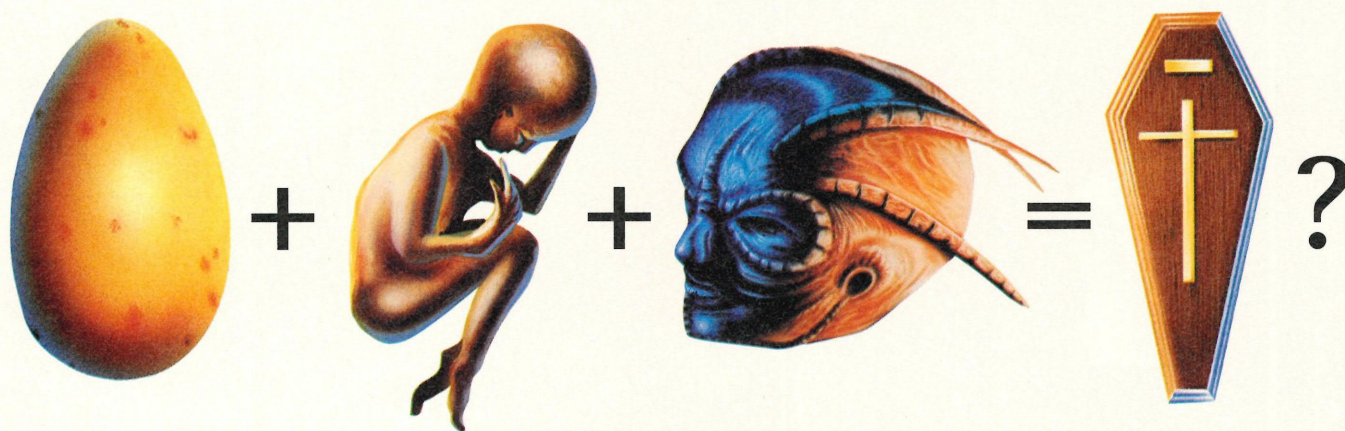
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PHILIPS

MILLENNIA

ALTERED DESTINIES



THE KEY TO LIFE?

"Millennia: Altered Destinies could be the most exciting game design of 1995."

Steve Honeywell
Computer Game Review

"Here's a 'God Game' with a difference ... Millennia will surely be one of the most elaborate, ambitious and sophisticated galactic-adventure games ever to hit the market."

Bill Trotter
PC Gamer (US)

"This game has it all! Time travel, space battles, diplomacy, trade ... everything! Count me in!"

Peter Smith
Strategy Plus

NHL Hockey 96



Gordon Houghton gets his skates on and pucks off in the best ice hockey simulation yet.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comp.

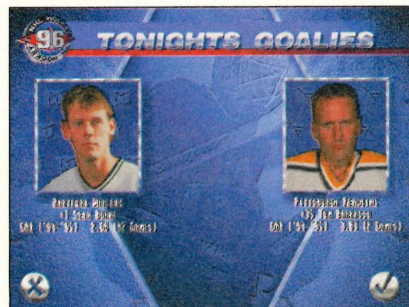
Despite cut-throat competition from bowling, darts and tiddlywinks, ice hockey is the biggest indoor spectator sport in Britain. Anyone who's seen a game live knows that it's also an excuse for a good fight involving fists, knees and big sticks. Despite this, its popularity is still relatively limited and its many computer incarnations have never, unfortunately, been particularly gripping.

EA's NHL-approved version could change all that. It's easily the most interesting simulation yet, with TV-style presentation, a mass of up-to-date stats, dozens of options and realistic action (including fisticuffs). It also gives you modern play, action replays and saved highlights, and lets you create your own career log.

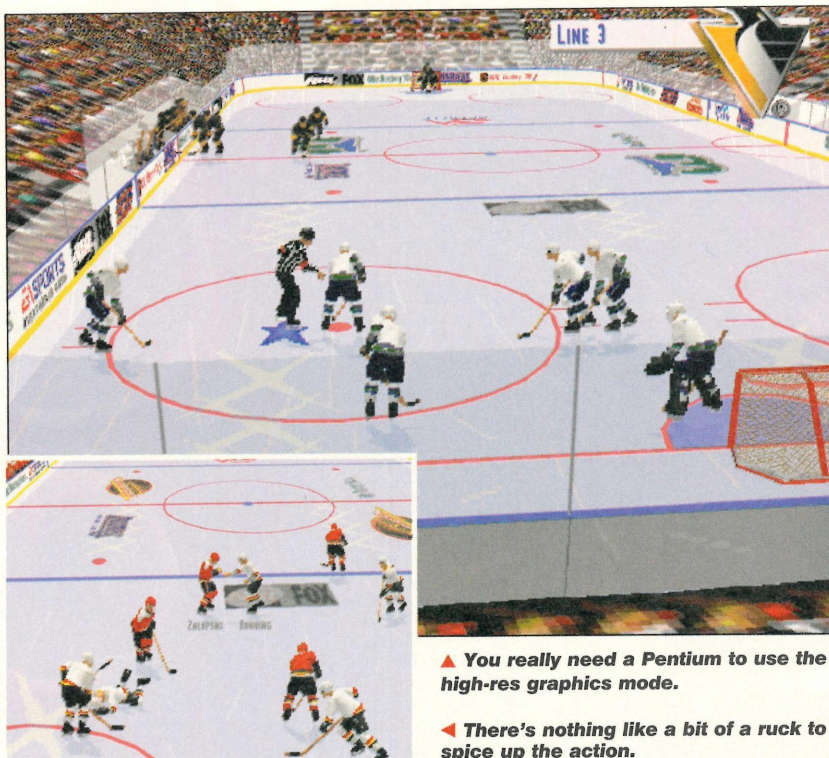
Exhibitionist

The pre-game routine is impressive. All 26 NHL teams plus Eastern and Western Conference All-Star teams have been included, and you can check out the stats of over 700 players. As well as setting the level of graphic detail and sound effects, you can also select one of two difficulty levels and three control modes (joystick, keyboard and mouse). Up to four players then choose from three types of game: exhibition, season and play-off.

The action itself gives you hundreds of different moves and tactics, a flexible control system and realistic player animations. The in-game effects are superb, with organ music, speech, good skating and puck-slapping sounds and some crunching collisions. If you haven't played a hockey sim before it might be some time before your first victory, but it's well worth the effort.



▲ All the real NHL players are included.



▲ You really need a Pentium to use the high-res graphics mode.

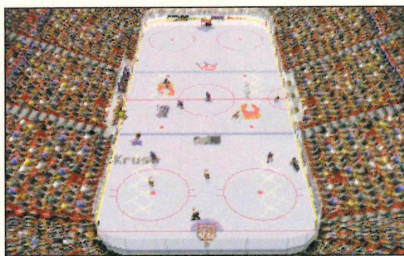
◀ There's nothing like a bit of a ruck to spice up the action.

Camera trouble

I've only got a couple of reservations: there's a little too much pre-match presentation for my liking (particularly the American national

anthem segment which you're forced to listen to before face-off), and during games the camera sometimes has trouble keeping up with the puck. Even so, if you're a hockey fan with a Pentium, you should buy it now. If you own a basic 486, you'll need to sacrifice some of the effects and exercise a little patience.

Eleven different camera angles let you view the action from one end, side-on, overhead, or even at ice level. ▼



▲ NHL is stunningly presented.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Sports sim

Publisher:Electronic Arts

Price:£44.99

Contact:(01753) 549442

If you're interested in flashing blades and ice hockey, you won't find a better simulation than this.

8



RED

GHOST



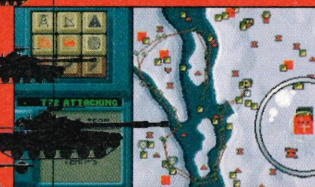
Red ghost is a superb audio visual experience

that combines the best elements of action

strategy and simulation in one explosive game

PC CDROM

COMMAND AND CONTROL AN INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL FORCES UNIT WITH ORDERS TO ATTACK AND DESTROY AN ULTRA SECRET MILITARY FORCE KNOWN ONLY AS RED GHOST. THE MISSION IS TOP SECRET AND MUST BE CARRIED OUT CLINICALLY AND EFFICIENTLY. SKILFUL MANAGEMENT OF TROOPS AND RESOURCES ARE VITAL TO ACHIEVE MULTIPLE MISSION OBJECTIVES.



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INTERACTIVE



◀ Do you trust the good doctor? He might patch you up during the game, but he'll stitch you up in the end.

Burn:Cycle originally debuted on Philips CD-i around 18 months ago, and now here it is on PC trailing numerous awards and plaudits in its wake, including (it says here) '5 out of 5' from Satellite Times and 'Game Of The Month' from Satellite TV Europe. High praise indeed — and if it's good enough for those



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX, MSDOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

For God's sake, pass us the aspirin — David Upchurch's head is about to explode!

discerning reviewers, then it's got to be good enough for us too, right?

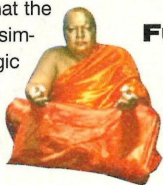
Er, wrong. You see, Burn:Cycle is another of those 'interactive movie' thingies, in which rendered animations and blue-screened actors struggle valiantly to conceal the fact that the game is essentially little more than a simplistic adventure interspersed with logic puzzles and brief, none-too-difficult shoot 'em up sequences.

And while Burn:Cycle may have come as a revelation on CD-i (a machine not renowned for its vast library of classic games), on the PC it's a different story entirely — sadly, we've seen this sort of thing all too many times before.

In Burn:Cycle's favour is its intriguing plot, in which you control ace data thief Sol Cutter as he races against time to eliminate a lethal virus before it makes his brain explode. Although

the Bladerunner-ish setting is hardly original and the script so cliché ridden it makes your toes curl, there are enough twists, turns and shock surprises to keep you intrigued and playing through to the end.

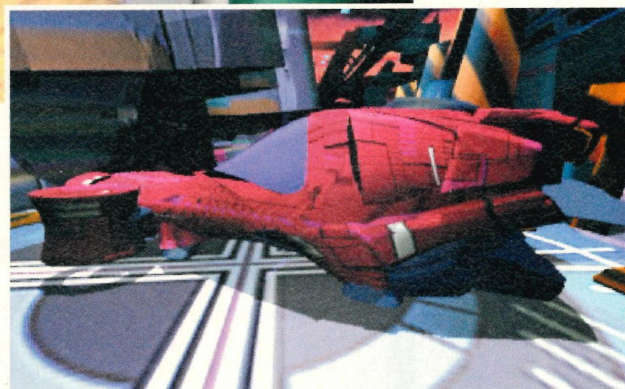
Fuzzy



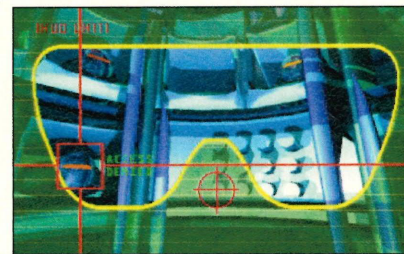
But that aside, Burn:Cycle exhibits all the usual 'interactive movie' failings, namely linear gameplay, lack of depth and fatally short lifespan (we managed to complete it in a day). Technically Burn:Cycle disappoints too — the full motion video sequences are grainy and ugly, while the fuzzy, poorly-digitised actors all look like they're wearing angora sweaters (which could go some way to explaining the low quality of a few of the performances).

With titles like 'Full Throttle' showing the way forward for the 'interactive movie' genre, you can't help but feel that Burn:Cycle is a bit old and out of date. Still, at least the game runs okay on a 33MHz 486 — and that's more than you can say for most releases these days.

◀ Oh, l'amour! Cutter is a bit of ladies' man — and if you actually play the game you'll find out just how true that is! (Cryptic, eh?)



▲ Burn:Cycle is short on originality — this lifter, for example, is a direct descendant of the spinners in Bladerunner.



◀ Large chunks of the game are viewed in the first person, but your freedom of movement is restricted — it's not Doom by any means.

PCR VERDICT

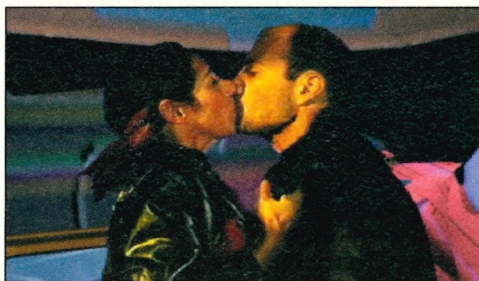
Type:Adventure

Publisher:Philips Media

Price:£44.99

Contact:.....(0171) 911 3094

Games as junk food — nice enough while it lasts, but ultimately unsatisfying.



Oh no! It's the iron chicken... And its brother. You actually get to take control of one of these walking death machines on the first mission, which means you can cause death and destruction without risking your own skin. ►



I was not a particularly nice child. While my friends were choosing outfits for their Barbie dolls, I was busy devising tortures for mine, such as hanging it from the banisters, sticking pins through the ears or, best of all, strapping her to the bar heater. I guess that when God made me, he'd run out of sugar and spice and all things nice and had to improvise with some altogether less wholesome ingredients.

It's none too surprising, then, that I should grow up to enjoy games like Crusader. Origin's latest is one of the most gloriously violent games I've ever had the pleasure to play.

Cal Jones doesn't need much of an excuse to perform acts of extreme violence, but Crusader provided her with one anyway...

Through the actions of your character, the red-armoured crusader of the title, you get to cause all sorts of carnage, from blowing up just about every inanimate object in the game to killing your enemies in a number of inventive ways. A simple bullet through the head does the job in most cases, but what if your quarry is hiding behind a stack of oil drums? Simple. Shoot the drums and they'll go up in a most satisfactory manner, turning the poor unfortunate into a screaming human torch.

◀ *Ooh, I love the smell of napalm in the morning...*

Hey, I haven't had this much fun since I played Bullfrog's Syndicate.

Brutal force

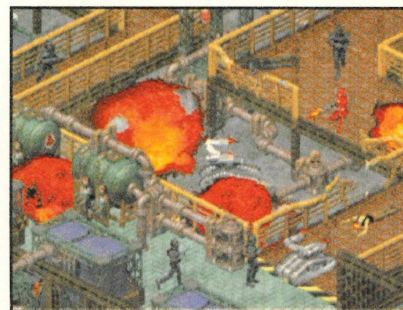
Crusader is brutal. If you took the slick, isometric graphics of Origin's 1994 title, Ultima VIII, updated them to ultra-crisp SVGA and added in a hefty dose of Syndicate-style violence, Crusader would be the result. It's an arcade adventure with the emphasis on action, the spunk of a John Woo movie and a plot straight out of a sci-fi novel. You can't really go wrong with that, can you?

Admittedly, the plot is fairly unoriginal: it's the old evil totalitarian state of the future versus the good guys of the resistance. You are a member of said resistance, and you've been sent on a series of daring raids designed to cause the downfall of aforemen-

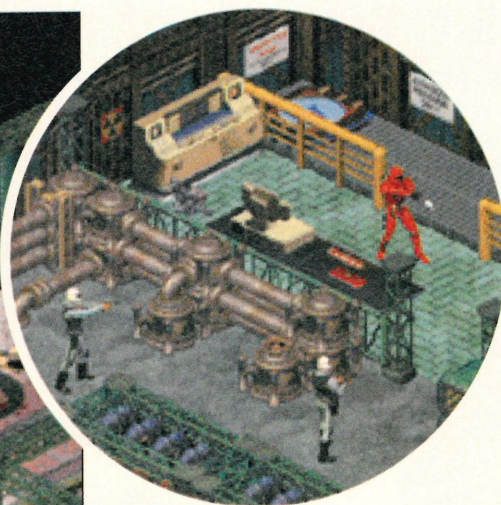
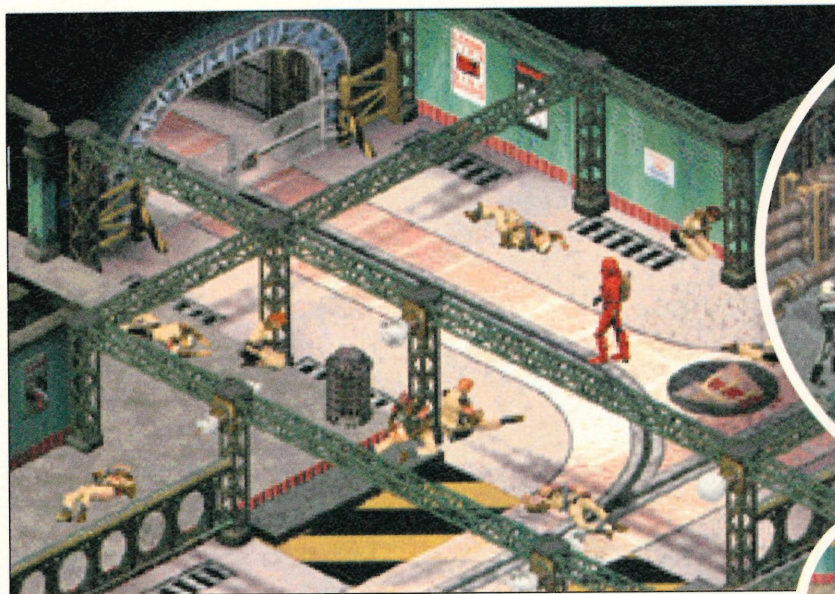
CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 486DX, MSDOS 5.0
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major soundcards



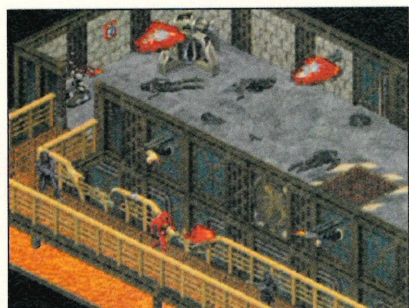
▲ *The isometric perspective and fluid animation gives Crusader a similar look to Ultima VIII. However, Crusader's SVGA graphics are much crisper and the animation is even more realistic — in other words, it looks fab.*



▲ *The action is definitely what you'd call explosive.*



◀ It's action from the word go. As soon as you arrive you've got guards firing at you — not good because at this stage you're still trying to figure out the controls.



◀ Oi! Did you spill my pint? Outside now!



◀ It's most gratifying when you get your hands on a really big weapon.

tioned evil totalitarian state. That's it, really. What it means, basically, is that you get to run around and shoot things a lot. And you can shoot pretty much anything, human or otherwise, with satisfying results. Barrels I've already mentioned, but oil tanks explode quite nicely and most other inanimate objects will take damage too. Committing wanton acts of vandalism is a great stress reliever, but personally speaking, I'd rather save my ammo for people. Although you start with a fairly small weapon, you can pick up all sorts of goodies along the way, including laser guns, grenade launchers and the ultraviolet rifle which turns your enemies into slimy piles of melted flesh. Yummy.

But it isn't just about killing. You have to retrieve objects, sabotage things using remote controlled bombs, contact other resistance members and solve the odd puzzle (usually something simple along the lines of finding the access code to a door, which, it turns out, has been carelessly left on a nearby computer). I won't call it the thinking man's shoot 'em up,

because you don't have to think that hard to solve the problems it throws at you. But there are plenty of things to keep you occupied nonetheless. The control system is daunting at first — your character can walk, run, jump, sidestep and roll sideways, all of which use different keystrokes. Using objects, changing weapons and searching for useful items requires you to learn other keys as well. It's an unwieldy system to get to grips with and makes for a steep learning curve, but once you're conversant with the controls you can perform all sorts of flashy manoeuvres.

Excellent

Crusader, then, is an all-round likeable game. It plays well, once you get into it, and the presentation is excellent, with lots of attention to detail in the animation, flashy FMV cut-scenes and plenty of meaty sound effects. The violence might disturb some, but then you only have to shoot the guards — faced with an unarmed man who's pleading for his life, it's

up to you whether you pull the trigger or not (and you tend to feel a bit guilty if you do). I found the puzzles a bit unnecessary since they occasionally got in the way of the action, and the game did get a tad repetitive after a while (though destroying things and people is enough incentive to keep going).

However, Crusader doesn't suffer from any serious drawbacks. It has a fair bit of depth, and with four difficulty levels, you can complete it a couple of times at least without tiring of it. I wouldn't call it a classic, but it's good fun. And that's the whole point of games, isn't it?



PCR VERDICT

Type:Action adventure

Publisher:Origin/Electronic Arts

Price:£49.99

Contact:(01753) 549442

Fast, frantic and wonderfully violent. A real treat for latent psychopaths, arsonists and vandals.

8



▲ You have to play it on "No remorse" level to get this much mayhem.



▲ Ernest had problems with the amount of static generated by his nylon catsuit.



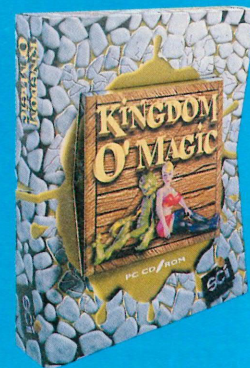


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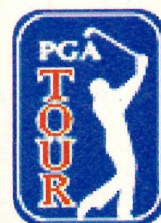
90 characters,
105 locations...
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PGA Tour 96



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 66MHz 486DX2

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster or comp

Love watching golf but can't stand all that fresh air? Simon Shaw invites you to tee up from the comfort of your deskchairs.

should perhaps make it clear from the off that I agree wholeheartedly with Mark Twain that golf is a good walk spoiled, that I've no interest whatsoever in the wretched game, and that nothing has me reaching faster for the off-switch on my TV than the sound of Peter Alliss's voice. And yet, somehow and strangely, computer golf games have got me hooked.

Motor racing and the odd halfway decent footie program apart, no other type of sports sim comes close. The combination of skill and precision mixed with high-class graphics and presentation results in a kind of aesthetically enhanced 3D physical chess. Even average golf games are playable, and this latest update of the old PGA Tour standard is a hell of a lot better than that.

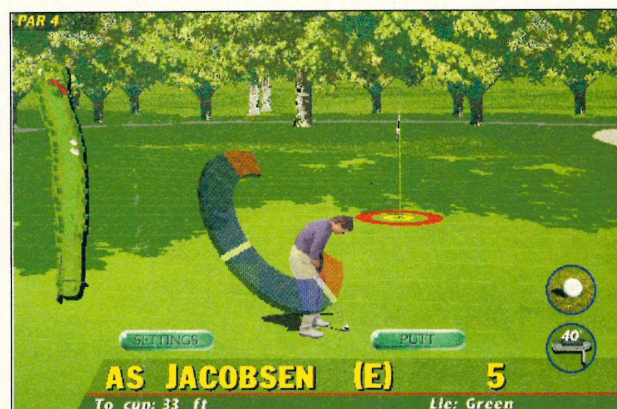
The PGA series has always been among the easiest to get into, with the simplest of point-and-triple-click playing systems. No complex weighing of clubs and distances is required. Of course, you can tweak and fine-tune, but

the default allows a novice to get to grips within seconds. You simply point the ball where you think you want it to go, and click on the mouse button to release your swing. Mis-time your click, though, and the ball will end up a long way from your intended target.

Match play

Of course it's nowhere near as easy as it sounds, but after a few minutes practice I found myself able to give Tom Kite and Fuzzy Zoeller a fair game. Fourteen famous American golfers have been digitised, and you can match yourself against them at Tournaments, Shoot-outs and Skins. I managed to win \$180,000 over the weekend which can't be bad.

The graphics are excellent and generally crisp, although putting, as ever, remains as much a matter of instinct as judgement. On balance I have to say that I still prefer Links, but if you want an accessible, fun golf game, PGA Tour 96 can't be bettered.



PCR VERDICT

Type:Golf simulator

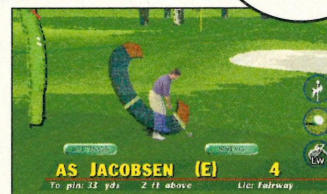
Publisher:Electronic Arts

Price:£44.99

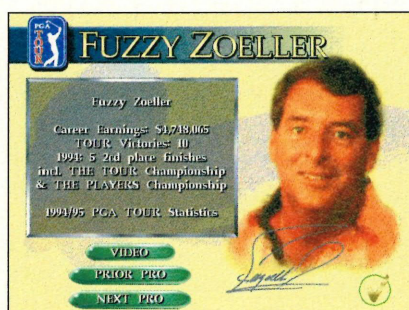
Contact:(01753) 549442

Makes up in playability what it lacks in sophistication. Superb all-round fun.

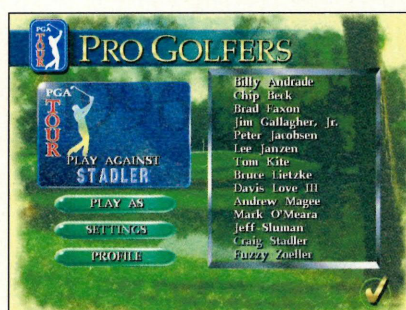
8



▲ The commentary is very useful during the putting sequences, hinting at the lie of the green.



▲ You can play PGA Tour '96 against real-life golfers or your friends, and you won't need a modem.



▲ There are three on-screen windows that give an enhanced feel of the play of each hole.



.....I WAS A CIVIL SERVANT UNTIL I PLAYED "BUD TUCKER IN DOUBLE TROUBLE" !!

"Bud Tucker in Double Trouble"- PC CD-ROM • Available November 1995

Merit Studios (Europe) Ltd, Metro Centre East Business Park, Waterside Drive, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE11 9HU, England. Tel: +44 (0) 191 460 60 60 • Fax: +44 (0) 191 460 22 66



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Sound: All major sound cards


Quarantine II however is a lot better, and although it too plays like a Doom-like 3D perspective game, set in a taxi, the movement is fast and furious, and




OMKILLAND

a-a targets certain a-a-a-a-a
press OK to return map

DANGER! YOU'RE STILL IN DANGER! YOU KILLED MOST OF THE CLOWNS, BUT YOU WON'T BELIEVE ALL THAT'S GOING ON! WE'VE SPREAD PAST THIS! YOU KILLED THOSE CLOWNS AND THEY HATE A THUNDER TO PROVE YOU'VE GONE KIDNAP! NOW HERE'S THE REALLY BAD NEWS: THERE'S A



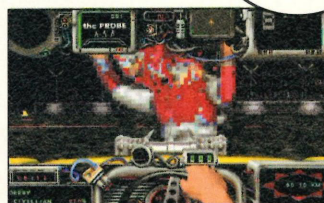


CLOWNS: 1000000
CLOWNS: 1000000
CLOWNS: 1000000

CLOWNS: 1000000
CLOWNS: 1000000
CLOWNS: 1000000

▶ **Your passengers are the ones who give you missions to complete. Some are more appealing than others.**

More gore than an explosion in a kebab shop, and, shock horror, playable too.



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INTERACTIVE MAGIC PRESENTS

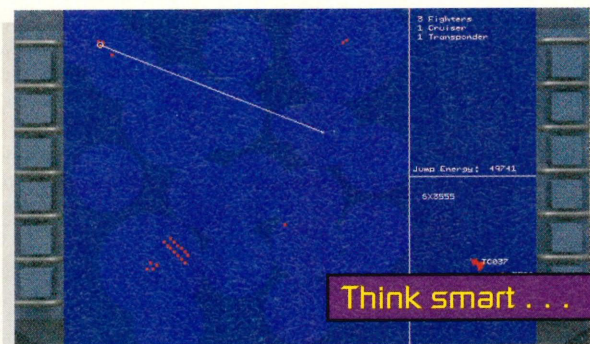
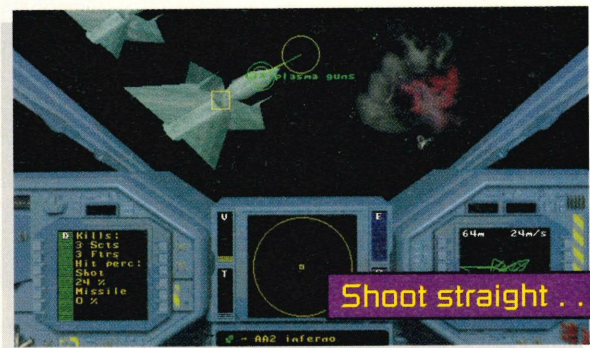
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CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 336DX, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Most major sound cards

Millennia

If time travel were possible, Pat Fox would go back and tell himself not to play Gametek's latest catastrophe.

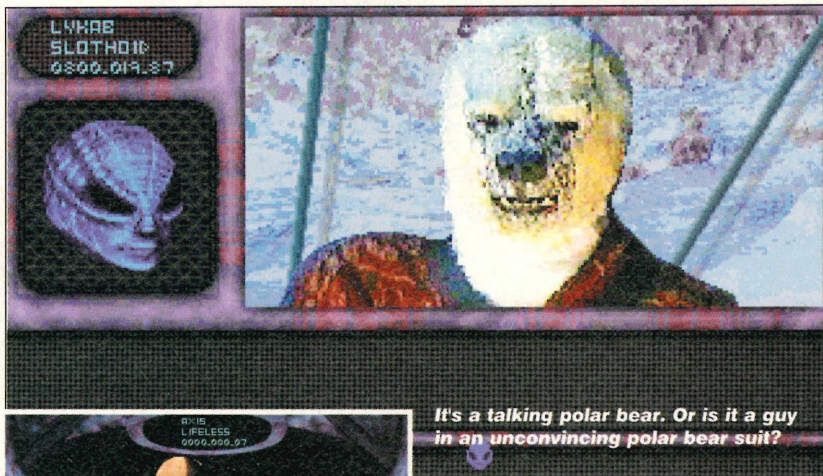
How's this for a plot? You're piloting your space cargo rig across the infinite blackness of space, when all of a sudden you're abducted by aliens who charge you with saving the universe by repopulating their moribund galaxy, hopping back and forth in time to ensure that everything is proceeding OK, and developing the necessary technology to defeat the evil invading Microids in the final battle. Yes, Gametek, the company behind the rather useless CyberBykes (reviewed issue 48, rated 2), has done it again.

But let's forget the silly background and take an objective look at Millennia. In order to realise your ultimate goal, you are put in charge of a spaceship that is capable of time travel, and granted the assistance of a computerised advisor, ANGUS. Fortunately you can switch him off if he gets too annoying.

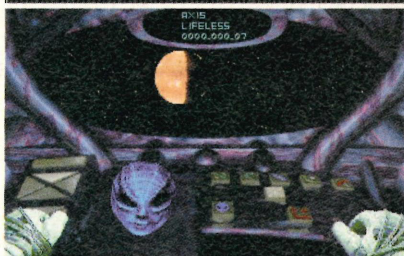
So you must explore the galaxy you have been sent to save, finding planets suitable for seeding with each of the four races you have been given the task of fostering. Once you have planted the seed of a given race on a suitable planet, you must use the "Time Wheels" to find out when it undergoes a crisis, and head off through the five-dimensional void to help them out.

And this is where it all falls apart. The crises generally fall into one of three categories: fighting off evil alien hordes, giving advice, or solving a puzzle. The space combat sequences are just about the most pitiful thing I've seen in my life: half a dozen unrecognisable blobs wobble unconvincingly over a flat backdrop while you take potshots at them. Risible. Giving advice to your intermediary involves sitting through some grainy FMV and selecting one of a couple of suggested responses until you get the right one, and the "puzzles" are so obvious it's embarrassing.

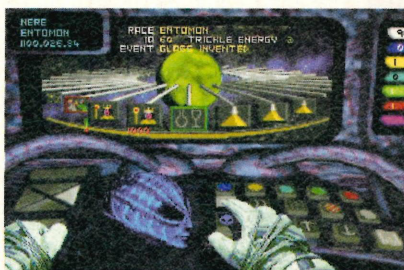
So is there anything worthwhile here at all? Well, not really: there are better games out there more deserving of your cash. Millennia might have been worthwhile as a budget release, but at this price, buy Ascendancy (previewed issue 48) instead.



It's a talking polar bear. Or is it a guy in an unconvincing polar bear suit?



▲ **ANGUS gives some advice. "Don't buy this game" he says. Wise words.**



▲ **The time wheels tell you what will happen in the future. Apparently East Cheam under 11s will win the league.**

PCR VERDICT

Type:Space strategy

Publisher:Gametek

Price:£39.99

Contact:.....(01753) 553 445

Time flies when you're having fun, but minutes seem like millennia when playing this.

4



.....MY NUMBERS RACKET WAS THE ODD LINE ON THE LOTTERY UNTIL I PLAYED "BUD TUCKER IN DOUBLE TROUBLE" !!

"Bud Tucker in Double Trouble" - PC CD-ROM • Available November 1995

Merit Studios (Europe) Ltd, Metro Centre East Business Park, Waterside Drive, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE11 9HU, England. Tel: +44 (0) 191 460 60 60 • Fax: +44 (0) 191 460 22 66



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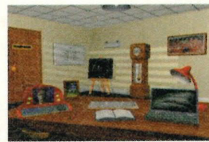
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ANCO

Published by Anco Software Ltd, Unit 7 Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH Tel: 01322 292513 Fax: 01322 293422. Screenshots are illustrative of gameplay only and may vary from format to format. Requires a joystick.

It's time for some nifty resource management. There are 24 islands in SimIsle, and on each you're given a set objective to achieve. ▼



SimIsle

Jim Gillies grows a beard, straps on his sandals and gets to grips with SimIsle.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486DX

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major soundcards



▲ **Can you build up a prosperous island, but without devastating the indigenous flora and fauna? Try it for yourself and see.**

PCR VERDICT

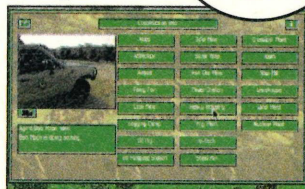
Type:.....Simulation

Publisher:.....Maxis

Price:.....£39.99

Contact:.....(0171) 490 2333

An excellent addition to the Sim series — who said ecology was boring?



9

Having built a thriving metropolis in SimCity 2000 and scraped the sky in SimTower, the thought of governing a small, south-east Asian tropical island might sound a bit, well, unexciting. But, oh, how wrong you'd be — indeed SimIsle, created right here in good old Blighty by Intelligent Games, is one of the finest Sim releases yet.

Like every Sim game, SimIsle is all about heavy-duty resource management. The added complication here, though, is pollution — crank up your industrial base without thought for the local environment and you'll be out of office before you can say 'Rainbow Warrior'. Rather than clicking on icons to control the action, you give orders to a team of 'agents' in your employ, each of whom possesses a variety of skills. This, combined with the 24 pre-set scenarios, gives SimIsle a much more gamesy feel, which should ensure it appeals to an even wider audience than previous Sim titles may have done.

Oh, one last thing — the rumours that Maxis is putting a 'Detonate Nuclear Weapon' icon in the French version of the game are, of course, totally unfounded.

shorts

Bricks, Blocks and Clocks



Puzzle compilation

Here's a treat for all you puzzle fans out there, a collection of three games to tease your brain and drive you slowly up the wall. Super Tetris isn't as good as the original — the strength of Tetris was its simplicity, and these "enhancements" rather spoil that — but it's still fun. Breakout is a similar get-rid-of-the-blocks-before-the-time-runs-out

affair, and diverting enough for a while. Weakest of the lot is Clockwerx, a strange affair involving swinging clockhands. Good value if you like that sort of thing.

Microprose, £19.99 • (01454) 326532 • 33Mhz 486DX, VGA, 4Mb, Windows 3.1



7

Breach 3



Combat/strategy

The third in a rather minor series, Breach 3 is a forced 3D strategy game that resembles that old chestnut Laser Squad. You take command of a squad of men (and women) whom you must guide in a series of daring missions. The action is shared between real-time combat and turn-based movement, as you explore uncharted regions in search of the enemy. Despite the rendered cutscenes, the game looks as if it was

written two or three years ago. If you have the cash, buy Command and Conquer instead.

Sierra, £19.99 • (01734) 303322 • 33Mhz 486DX, VGA, 4Mb, CD ROM drive



5

Fury 3



3D Shoot 'em up

Let's get this out of the way early: Fury 3 bears more than a passing resemblance to Terminal Velocity (Issue 47, rated 8), so if you own that game, then don't buy this. If, however, you don't, and you're a Win95 convert, Fury 3 is well worth a look. It's a shoot 'em up in the Descent tradition, but this time you're above ground as well as below. The graphics are smooth and detailed, and there are more than enough enemies to take pot shots at. The only major drawback is the lack of any network

option (unlike Terminal Velocity), which means whatever you do, you'll be doing it alone.

Microsoft, £39.99 • (01734) 270001 • 486DX, SVGA, 8Mb, CD-ROM Windows 95



7

Lands of Lore

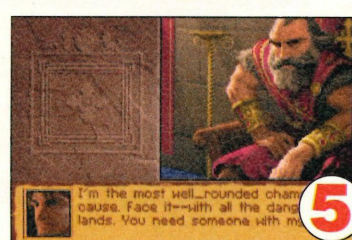


RPG adventure

Now over two years old, Lands of Lore: the Throne of Chaos was dated even when it first came on the market. A first-person perspective adventure game, it relied on block-scrolling, a technique that had already been superseded by the full 3D motion of the Ultima Underworld games, among others. However, it still offered a reasonably challenging adventure, if a little simple and limited. Back then (issue 24) it rated a 5,

and while the game has not really improved with time, at this price it is worth a look for hard-up RPG fans.

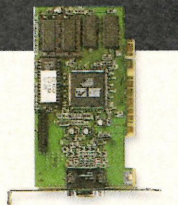
Virgin Interactive, £9.99 • (0171) 368 2255 • 386SX, VGA, 4Mb, Sound Blaster compatible



5

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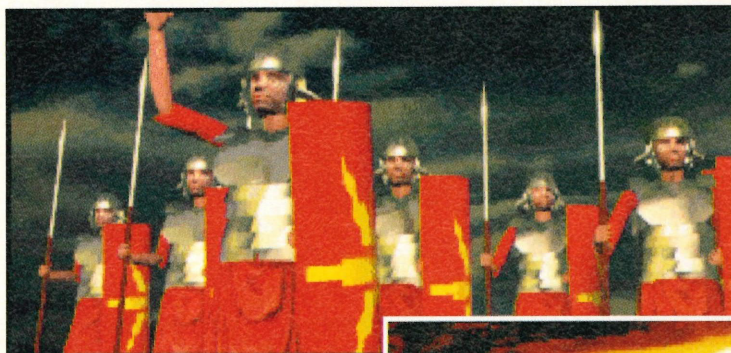
O N B O A R D W I T H

ATI Graphics Pro Turbo and ATI Graphics Xpression



Caesar 2 shorts

Friends, Romans, PC owners, lend Harry Atrill your time and he'll lend you a dinari.



CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 386DX 33MHz

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

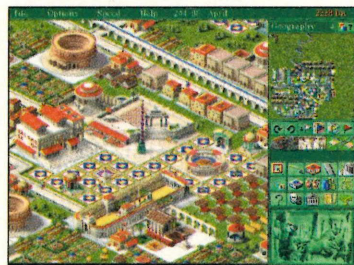
Sound: All major sound cards

I came, I saw, but I failed to stay. So The Senate, envious of Caesar's adventures in Britain, delighted in parodying his achievement. And indeed, Latin lovers, his prose. Having played Caesar 2 I found it, like the great Julius, mightily ambitious but irritatingly flawed. There is a sense in which it is a perfectly adequate sim, but if we can agree (and I think we can), that historical veritas is vital for sim integrity, then why has Sierra set this game in an age when Rome was a Republic and yet included an Emperor at the very heart of

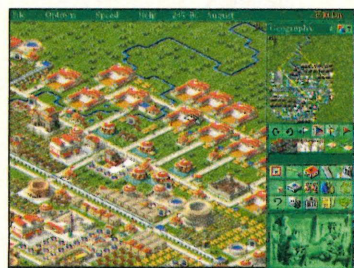
the plot? Substitute the word 'Consul' for 'Emperor' or, set the game after 31BC and lo, the god of historical accuracy is restored — and with no visible affect on gameplay!

Caesar 2 'feels' more like Sid Meier's Civilization (no bad thing) than a Maxis Sim and though it is a true hybrid of neither of these classics (aha-ha-ha) it contains elements of both (city building, military strategy, economic management, et cetera) without ever knitting them together completely convincingly.

Not bad, but not special either.



▲ Opt to build a huge metropolis



▲ ...or try to snatch the purple!

PCR VERDICT

Type:Empire building sim

Publisher:Sierra

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01734)303322

Competent, but not exactly original and has rather too many flaws.

6



Indy Car Racing

Driving game

Coming in the midst of a rash of new-style 3D, polygon-based driving games (Need for Speed, Fatal Racing, Screamer), it might seem that IndyCar Racing has chosen a bad time to hit the budget market. But, despite its age, it manages to hold its own rather well; it features some impressively detailed texture mapping on a reasonable number of poly-



gons, and it will run well on a lower-end machine. The driving itself is hard to fault, so if you're after a cheap thrill to keep you going until Indycar 2 and F1GP2 arrive, then this is for you.

Virgin Interactive, £9.99 • (0171) 368 2255 • 386SX, VGA, 4Mb, Sound Blaster compatible

REPLAY



8

AD&D: Masterpiece Collection

RPG compilation

Six whole games here, each one more than enough to fill a few solid weeks of game time. The two Dark Sun games are involving enough to keep your attention. Al Qadim is an RPG with an Arabian Nights-type theme, and is colourful, entertaining and mildly humorous but not too difficult. Stone Prophet, Ravenloft and Menzo-berranzan are 3D first-person games and, whilst low on originality,



should keep hard-core RPG fans happy. Others might find it an RPG overdose.

Mindscape, £44.99 • (01444) 246333 • 386DX40, 4Mb, VGA, CD-ROM, most sound cards



7

Ultimate Football '95

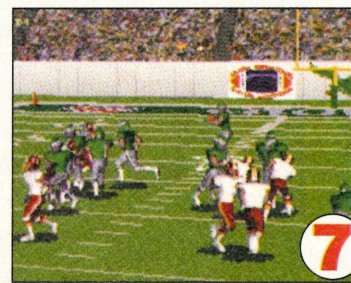
American football sim

There are more than a few American Football games out there, which seems a little strange given the lack of interest most people in this country show towards the sport. However, here's another computer conversion. Although you do have complete control over your players in-game, this simulation works best when it comes to management. The match playing sections are good-looking but tend to slow down alarmingly in places, even on a fast Pentium. That said, UF '95 is



slickly presented and very in-depth, so if you like American footie, you'll probably like this.

MicroProse, £34.99 • (01454) 326532 • 386DX, VGA, 4Mb, CD-ROM, most sound cards



7

Zoop

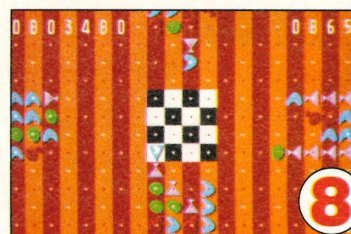
Puzzle game

Like Tetris? You do? Then you'll like Zoop. It's another one of those puzzle games, specifically designed to tax your brain and make you swear a lot, and it's darned good fun. Like all good puzzlers, it's the simplicity that makes it: you're at the centre of the screen, trying to shoot the shapes that are approaching from all sides before they encroach on your territory. There's more to it than that, but not much. It's fast and enjoyable to play,



and anything but easy. Watch out, if you're not careful you might just get hooked...

Viacom, £24.99 • (0181) 741 9333 • 386SX, VGA, 4Mb, CD-ROM, Sound Blaster compatible



8



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Capitalism



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 33MHz 386, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster Compatible

may be wrong, but I believe that the joy of a business sim like AIV Network\$ (issue 45, rated 9) comes from taking all that time to lay out roads and rails and watch the dinky little cars and trains pootle about. Similarly, Theme Park (issue 34, rated 9) was made by the graphics — it was great to watch those cute little sims trying out your latest ride, getting thrown off the rollercoaster and throwing up in the flowerbeds.

Pat Fox flexes a bit of corporate muscle with this business sim.



▲ *That's me at the top, with the beard.*



▲ *The main game screen. This is as exciting as it gets.*

What baffles me is where the fun is supposed to be in Capitalism. There's no little trains, no little people, just pages of figures and the odd photo of a factory or department store. Don't get me wrong: this game is far from ugly — the SVGA graphics are pretty and sensibly-arranged, and the whole thing is very attractively put together.

But this is not a game for those seeking a quick thrill. In fact, I doubt that there are many thrills to be had here at all, unless you get aroused at looking at graphs and statistics. This is a business sim, and nothing else. It's a very detailed one, too.

So as a business simulator, it's hard to find too much at fault with Capitalism. However, you could get a lot of this kind of detail and little trains to play with in AIV Network\$. Capitalism is less like playing a game than undertaking a degree in economics.

PCR VERDICT

Type:Business simulator

Publisher:Interactive Magic

Price:£39.99

Contact:(01276) 62462

Tries so hard to be ultra-realistic it's no fun at all – to the extent it barely resembles a game.

5

CAPITALIST JOUR

February 5, 2000

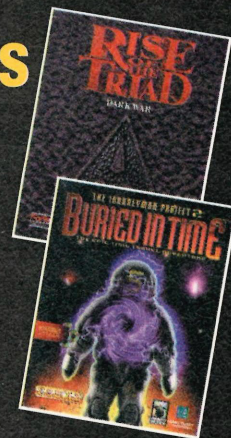
Global Link built a Factory in Kunming.



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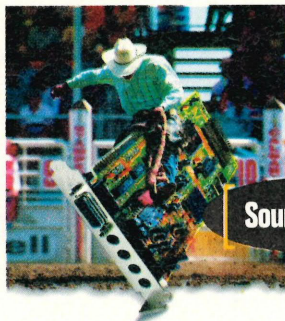
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The PC Review team has been totally conquered by this game, so we assembled these hard-won tips to help you out with this infuriating scrap 'em up.

It's that time again when our game gurus get their thinking caps on to help you out of your potential playtime problems.

Infantry

Different types of foot-soldier are useful in different situations:

Minigunners Particularly effective against other infantry, but well-nigh useless anywhere else.

Grenadiers Useful in gangs for taking out enemy artillery and small installations such as gun turrets.

Rocket Launchers Again, good against buildings and hardware (particularly helicopters).

Flame Throwers Great against large numbers of infantry, but one hit and they explode!

Chemical Warriors Much the same as Flame Throwers.

Commandos These are very tough, and are great for one-off missions, for example to destroy a particular installation. They can also take out individual soldiers at long range. However, they are a bit short in the grey matter department, and need to be told what to do at all times.

When sending a group of men into a skirmish, put Minigunners and/or Flame Throwers at the front, followed by grenadiers, with Rocket Launchers bringing up the rear. And always remember to spread your men out — they're very easy to take out when they're in tight formation.

One particularly effective way to protect your base is to form a "human barrier" of infantry, spread out all around the base, and several men thick. This will tend to confuse your enemies, and the concentrated firepower will wipe them out long before they actually reach your fortifications.

General Tips:

Setting up a base: Take care to choose a good location for your base. Don't just set up wherever you land. Try to build up against a cliff to block off the route of attack, and if possible near a plentiful supply of that all-important Tiberium.

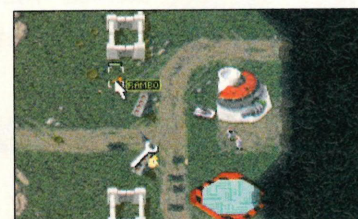
Harvesting Tiberium: If you have the cash and a big enough Tiberium field, it's worth building a second harvester to get the money in quicker. But remem-

ber, Tiberium will only grow back if you give it the chance — over-harvesting will strip the land completely.

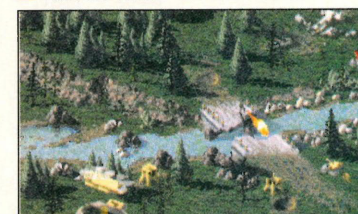
Exploring: When you start a new mission, it's a good idea to build a fast vehicle (a Hum-Vee or Assault Cycle) and drive it around exploring the level. If you keep moving, you can find out lots of useful info about your enemy's position and armament.

Sneaky stuff: Often your mission involves taking out an enemy base, which can be very difficult if your opponent has good fortifications and plentiful forces. In this case, sneak tactics can work better than a head-on assault. Build up a force that includes a couple of tanks, and a Hum-Vee or Dune buggy. Now build an APC and fill it with Engineers, and build a dozen or so general troops. Send the tanks in first to occupy any gun turrets, then the infantry and any other loose armament you have, to cause a diversion. As soon as the attack is in full swing, send in the APC and use the Engineers to take over some important

Command & Conquer



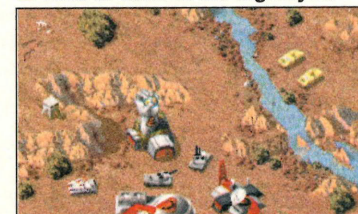
▲ Rambo takes on the world.



▲ Have you got a light, boy?



▲ Time to send in the big boys...



▲ ...or maybe just run away.

Star Trek: Next Generation

A
FINAL
UNITY

3

Still lost in space? Let us take you by the hand and lead you through the final instalment of our complete intergalactic walkthrough guide . . .

ROMULAN INVASION

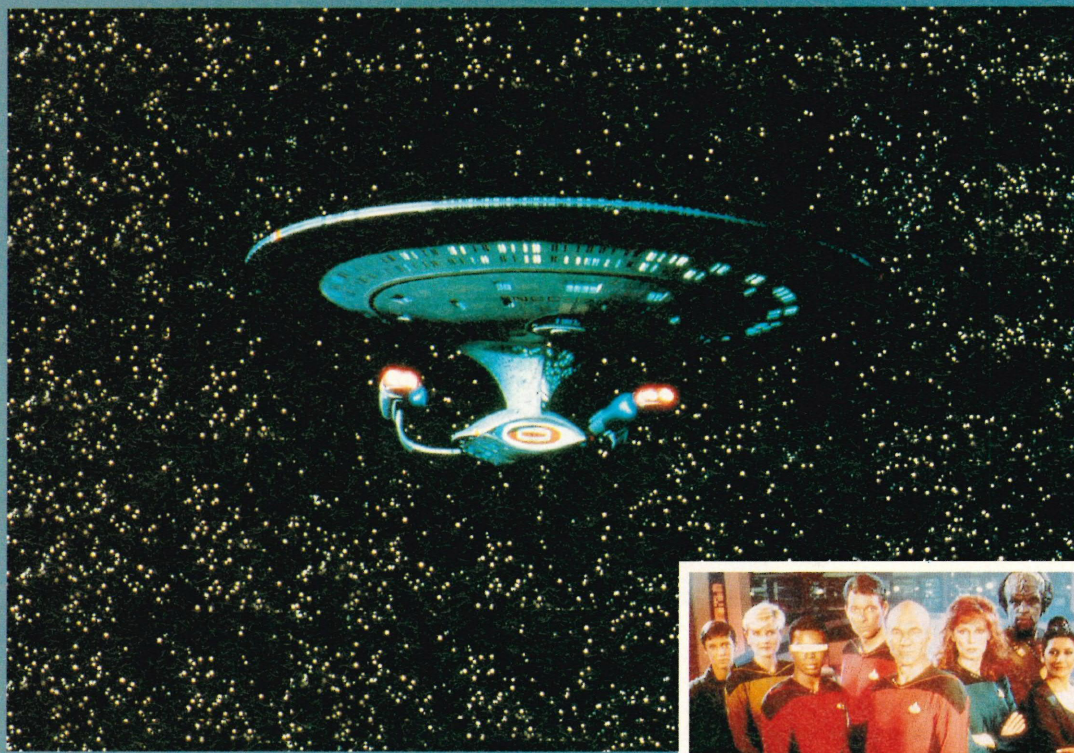
That bastion of space travel, the Starship Enterprise zooms off into hyper-space in search of Klingon birds of prey. ▶

STEP 1: You will receive an emergency transmission from Starfleet telling you that the Romulan fleet has crossed into Federation space. When you hail Starfleet, Worf will establish contact with Admiral Reddreck who will send you to outpost 543. On arrival hail Commander Chan, and she will send you to comm relay 543.

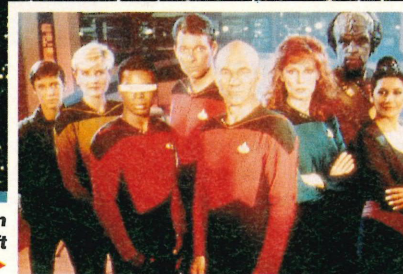
Some Romulan warbirds will arrive, but when you engage them they will retreat. Let them go and attack the one that breaks away to attack you. When you have finished him off hail Commander Chan again, and she will send you to find a particular starship. Attack the warbird that you meet, and when Picard hails him ask him why he crossed the neutral zone — tell him that he is a fool if he thought he could get away with it.

STEP 2: Talk to commander Chan, who will send you to aid a Klingon ship; if you meet any warbirds on the way then destroy them. The Klingon will hail you, and once you have finished communicating with it, speak to Commander Chan again. Now fly back to Shonoisho Epsilon Six and destroy the warbird that is attacking Frigis.

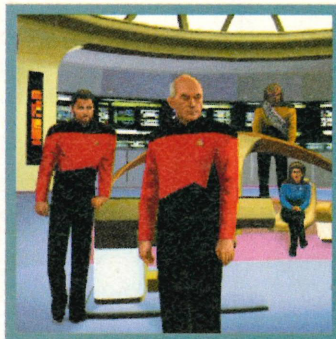
Hail the chancellor, then Beam Picard down to the planet and talk with Laraq, who will give you a Chodak rod, rod programmer and data crystal. Beam up and set course for Horst III.



The original crew in all their glory — yes, Picard was bald back then too. The two on the left — Wesley Crusher and Tasha Yar — later left the series, and therefore do not appear in the game at all. Oops. ▶



HORST III



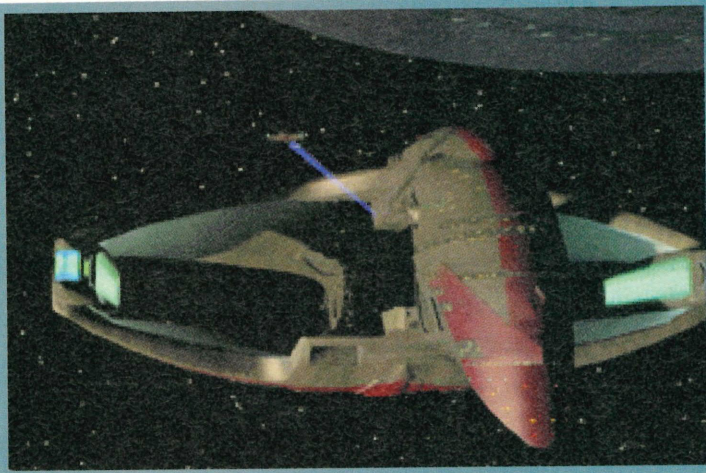
STEP 3: When you arrive beam down; take Picard, Troi, Data and La Forge, with the phaser and tricorder. Set the phaser on high and fire at the pile of rubble, then walk through the gap you have made. Walk left and take tricorder readings on all parts of the instrument in the room. Now go right and use the screen. Use the rod on the

◀ **Aboard the Enterprise, the crew assume their habitual positions. For some reason, Riker enjoys standing on one leg.**

aperture, then use the programmer on the rod, and take a tricorder reading of the information now displayed on the screen. Take the rod out and beam up to the Enterprise.

STEP 4: If the Enterprise is damaged or low on torpedoes, go to one of the starbases quickly because admiral Williams will now ask you to attack some alien vessels. After having dealt with them, return to starbase if necessary, before flying to Allanor.

ALLANOR



STEP 5: Beam down to Allanor taking Picard, Data, La Forge and Carlstrom with you. Take the phaser, tricorder, medkit, rod and programmer. Take tricorder readings of the doors, schedule, drone and foreign object in the room. Now fire the phaser, on high setting, at the three alloy seals around the ventilation duct and walk through the duct. Use the display panels and the rod on the aperture, then the programmer on the rod. Choose the System Log on the screen, then the Main Database,

and despatch a repair unit. Press Initialise System and Activate System. Take out the rod and exit the panel.

STEP 6: Walk right and use the tricorder to examine the two drones that are in the room. Head back to the start and use the tricorder on the drone to deactivate it. Take the foreign object/logic inhibitor from the drone, and walk back to the other drones. Pick up the sheet of metal which is lying on the floor to the right of the screen. Walk

◀ **A Romulan Warbird looking menacing. Switch on the red flashing lights, it looks like a fight's in the offing.**

to the door at the back of the room, and use the logic inhibitor on the door circuits, which are located slightly to the left of the door. Deactivate the next drone that stops at the door. Pick up the logic inhibitor and walk through the door.

Use the display panel to turn on the power and put the station on-line. Exit the panel. When the drone moves off and all the green lights on the capacitor come on, use the panel again and turn the power off. Wait for two more drones to come, charge and leave then quickly turn the station off line. Fire the phaser at the capacitor so that it blows. Two aliens will appear, and you should follow them into the next room. Talk to their leader and tell him that you are on an archeological expedition, and you are seeking knowledge. Tell him that you know nothing about the encryption rods, but refuse any help that he offers.

Now head to the right and use the panel on the wall. Press button 3 on the left of the panel and button 1 on the top. Press the blue button, then the timer bar on the right of the panel. Now exit and go to the transporter. Walk to the arch-

ways and turn right. Use the tricorder on the lens, then on one of the lights, then on one of the sensors. Set phasers to 737 angstroms and fire at all three sensors, then walk to the door. If the sensors come back on, shoot them again before walking towards the door. If one of your team gets injured, use the medkit on them.

STEP 7: Head to the obelisk at the back of the room, use the pedestal and put the rod in the port. Use the programmer on it as before. Quickly use the tricorder on the screen where it says 'CHART-45-NX-D'. The Chodak will arrive and take the rod and the programmer; when they leave use the tricorder on the other files that are on the screen. Now leave the room.

Wait for them to leave before walking to the panel and using the wire loop on the hole to release the security rod. Now make your way back to the transporter. Press button 2 on the left and 3 on the top of the panel. Return to the start and talk to Data before beaming up. Data will now run analysis on the information you have collected from your mission. Head back to federation space when the Romulan ship arrives, so as to avoid the outbreak of a full-scale battle.

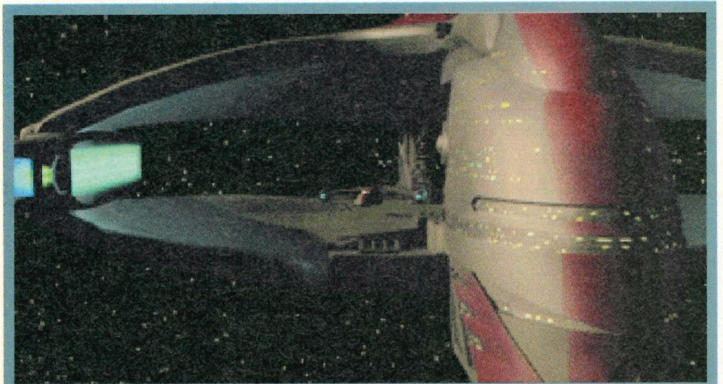
UNITY DEVICE

STEP 8: The Enterprise will fly to the unity device in sector 3-1-3 at co-ordinates 9-14-16. If you have made a mistake and you do not go there straight away, you can just fly to the co-ordinates when you get the opportunity. You will arrive at the device at the same time as Captain Pentara, and Admiral Brodnack in his Chodak dreadnought will arrive soon after. Choose to take evasive manoeuvres. Wait a moment and the other two ships will send shuttles down to the device; Picard will then go down himself in a shuttle.

STEP 9: When you land, head right, into the interior bay. Get all the members of your party to walk to the alien device/transporter. Picard will then materialise on his own, walk left and get into the shuttle with Pentara and Brodnack. After watching a stunning piece of animation, tell Pentara you will work together with her. Walk through the nearest door — Picard will see a being who claims to be from the future, and it will give you an artifact. Tell the others about it, then talk to Brodnack and wait for the test to begin. Talk to Pentara, say there must be another way out and then do the same to Brodnack. Tell him you could perhaps disable the force field, and that he could lose. Now use the table and only fire at Brodnack three times. When Brodnack talks, don't kill him, ask for his help.

Picard is famous for his calm, immobile countenance. Sometimes you might almost think he was computer-generated. ▶

STEP 10: Pick up the disk piece from the table, and walk to the field generator. Use one of the blocks you have from the table on the other so that they join together to make a ring. Put the ring in the lower air gap in the generator. Examine all the parts of the generator, so that Picard realises that he can use the other players' disks in the gap in order to deactivate the field. Tell Pentara and Brodnack that you have found a way to deactivate the generator. They will give up their blocks, so join them together and put them in the gap in the generator. The field should lower. Walk right. Use the artefact three times to transport all three of you across the gap. Pick up the symbol and walk through the doorway. Use the symbol on the far door, and walk through. Go to the stasis chamber and use the panel nearby to open it. When it is your turn to speak to the creature, tell him that you will use the unity device for the good of all. Once the door opens, head through it and to the right. Next walk to the tower which will transport you up to the device control room. The device will inform you of an approaching Borg fleet. Use the control panel that appears and deactivate the panel instead of destroying the Borg fleet or race.



▲ **It's that darned Romulan Warbird again, and this times it's very angry. Send them over a box of choccies and maybe they'll cheer up.**

And that's your lot! Now you can sit back and watch the spectacular end sequence...



Grolier Science Fiction

‘This month we review everything from reference titles such as the ITN European Atlas to the genuinely useful Autoroute Express. You need never get lost again!

Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives marks out of 10 to rate multimedia products. The score takes into account elements such as presentation, ease of use and how well the subject is covered. We are strict on multimedia. Five is average, so anything rated higher is better than average and a product has to be extremely good to score a coveted eight or nine.

High Lights



Sci Fi	112
Autoroute	115
ITN Atlas	118
Shorts	121



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows comp. cards

If you think science fiction is all about bug-eyed aliens, interstellar war and strange jargon, this encyclopaedia will change your mind. Grolier Science Fiction (GSF) does a good job of conveying the all-encompassing history of sci-fi subculture, from the early dystopian visions of the future and the schlock magazines and films of 1940s and 50s, through to the present day. Hordes of facts, plot summaries, illustrations and interviews make this a bold attempt to define a patently nebulous subject.

It's sensibly structured, too. There are only 6,000 entries, but with five main

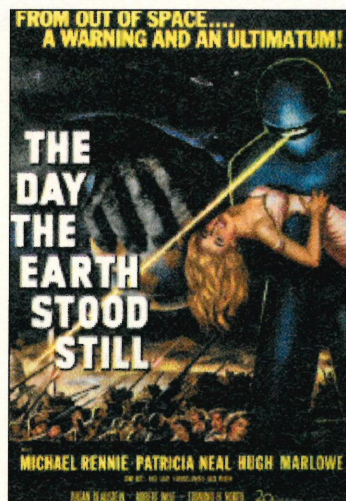
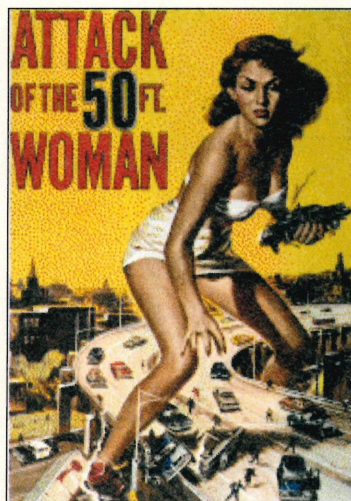
Life, the universe and everything... Gordon Houghton attempts to make sense of it all with help from Grolier.

ways to examine them and a complex series of cross-references, it feels like there's much more on offer. Movie buffs and book-browsers are well catered for, but if you want to examine individual themes, look at pretty pictures or place science fiction in its historical context, it's just as easy.

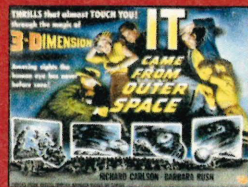
The whole package is well designed and presented, from the manual which you can read in a couple of minutes to the cute icons and pull-down menus on every screen which take you quickly to any other part of the encyclopaedia. Online help, a complex word-search tool and a comprehensive backtracking util-

ity all make finding what you want very simple indeed.

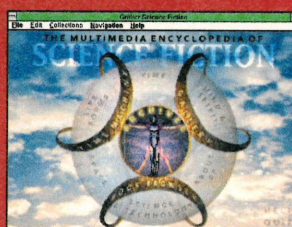
A couple of other features are worth mentioning. As you would expect, you can print or copy to the clipboard any passage of text or illustration. In addition, you can make your own reference works by creating a dossier of up to 256 different entries. For example, if you're interested in artificial life forms, you can use word search to seek out references to androids, cyborgs or robots. Once you find the entry you're looking for, you can follow the cross-references to related text, videos, photos and films, and add them to your collection.



START HERE



To boldly go...
From pulp sci-fi movies to classic novels, there's a wealth of information at your fingertips. We have lift off...



Sci-fi nuts begin their quest for knowledge at the main screen. All the major reference areas and themes are instantly accessible at the click of a button.



For example, you can check out over 6,000 different entries in the vast archives of the encyclopaedia. Select a topic from the list on the right and the information appears on the left.



Finally, there are half a dozen major themes to use as a starting point for your exploration, including time, space, science, mind and spirit and life forms.



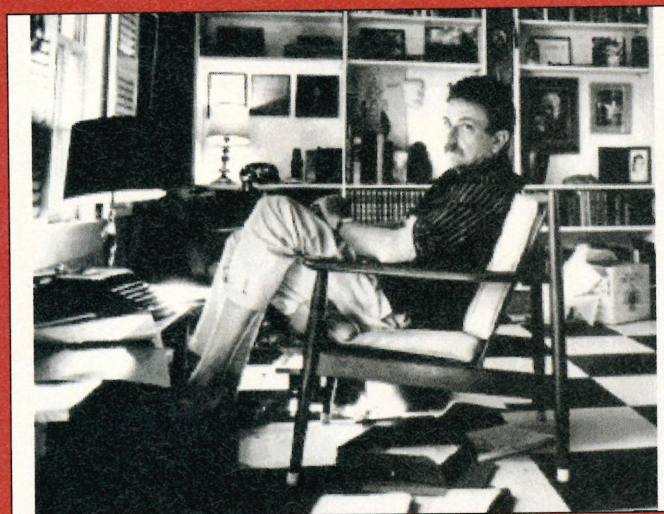
One of GSF's more impressive features is its collection of author interviews and photographs. This is Bruce Sterling, one of the founders of the cyberpunk movement.



It's funny how writers never look quite how you imagine. Meet Greg Bear, author of *Eon*, *Forge of the Gods*, *Nova* and a whole catalogue of other titles.



If reading is too much of a strain, visit the Gallery. It contains over 2000 pictures, videos and sound-bites relating to authors, films, books and magazines.



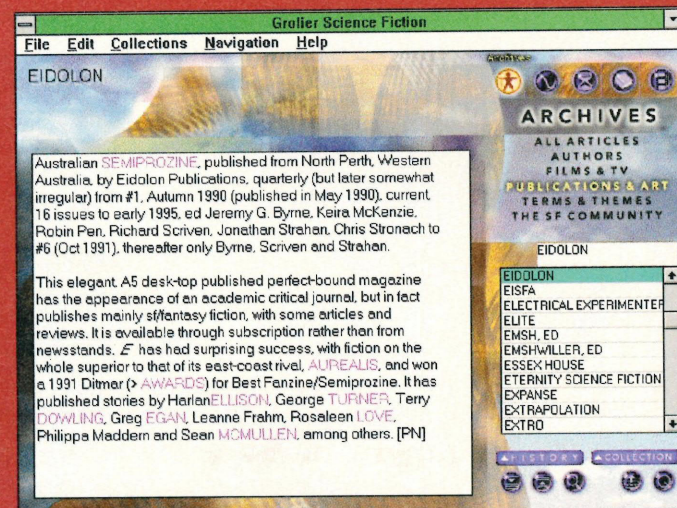
Over one-third of all the references are illustrated with posters, videos, magazine and book covers and pictures such as this photograph of Kurt Vonnegut. It's just a pity that the other two thirds aren't illustrated, making the program appear text-heavy.



Next, take a look at the Book Browser. It provides plot summaries of over 300 of the more famous SF books, most illustrated with jacket covers or related media.



If you prefer the chronological approach, the Time Machine gives you the history of science fiction from Thomas More's *Utopia* to the present day.



Information is presented in a dense and heavily cross-referenced fashion — not to everyone's taste. However, it is at least comprehensive and the hypertext makes it easy to find your way to other related topics.

There are several areas in which Grolier Science Fiction will disappoint the more knowledgeable sci-fi fan. As a general guide it's superb, but one CD just isn't big enough to hold a complete reference work across all media. Some books currently available provide a cheaper and more comprehensive source of information. For example, Longman's Science Fiction Source Book (edited by David Wingrove) lists 2,000 novels (six times as many as GSF), and the Octopus Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction Movies contains over 1,200 entries and 500 pictures.

GSF does offer the advantages of video, although this too is a bit disappointing when it comes to films. There are only half a dozen movie snippets, and most of those are either trailers or extracts from very old releases. If you're looking for a clip from modern classics such as *Alien*, *Star Wars*, *Robocop* or *The Terminator*, forget it.

I've only got a couple more gripes. First, the arrangement of entries in the selection window is not very logical and a bit irritating: if the film or book you're searching for begins with 'A' or 'The', you could find yourself looking in the wrong place. For example, *The Lost World* is listed as *Lost World*, but *The War of the Worlds* appears as it stands. Secondly, the American bias throughout can be a little confusing if, say, you want to know the publisher of a book. So, Isaac Asimov's world famous Foundation Trilogy lists Doubleday as its publisher, whereas Grafton publishes it in the UK.

None of these drawbacks is very serious, and they don't prevent me from recommending GSF to sci-fi enthusiasts and anyone else who wants to know more about the genre. It's particularly strong on authors, its cross-referencing system establishes links you might never have previously considered, and its easy-to-use interface makes each voyage into the unknown a pleasure.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Reference

Publisher: Matra Hachette

Price: £44.99

Contact: (00331) 4745 9450

PROS

A well presented and beautifully illustrated introduction to sci-fi culture.

CONS

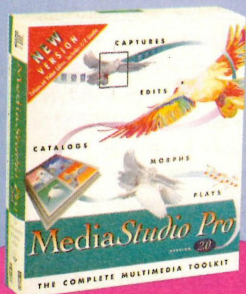
The broad approach inevitably leads to omissions, and the range of videos is poor.

7

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AutoRoute Express

With this handy journey planner, you need never get lost again. Martin 'Roadrunner' Klimes puts Autoroute Express through a vigorous road test. Meep, meep.

All hail, Microsoft! Not long ago a copy of NextBase's AutoRoute would have cost you a couple of weeks salary, not to mention a right ear-bending from the missus who'd rather you'd spent your hard-earned readies on a much-needed new washing machine or dish washer.

Well, now that Uncle Bill has bought out NextBase's rights to AutoRoute and published it on the Microsoft label at a more sensible price, you can have both. I can't vouch for the washing machine, but AutoRoute's as good a use of your pay cheque as you'll see this side of Christmas.

For those of you who haven't heard of AutoRoute before (and it usually gets spoken of in revered tones by colleagues and friends after they've seen what it can do), it's a piece of software that maps your journeys across Europe. Simple as that.

What's great about it though, is that it's phenomenally accurate, and hardly ever throws you a bum steer. If you want to ensure that you're on the fast track to your destination, then this is the only way to go.

Workmanlike

Aesthetically speaking, AutoRoute isn't much of a looker. What you have here, basically, is a map which you can zoom in and out of or scroll across until you find the location you're looking for. The map can be as plain or as detailed as you want. If golf courses or ancient



CD AND DISK

Minimum PC: 386SX, Wind 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: 4VGA

Sound: Windows compatible

landmarks are important to you, you can opt to include them on your map. If you want every village named, or every major waterway, that's fine too. Such details aren't usually necessary if you're planning a motorway trip between, say, London and Manchester, but it does give you some idea of where to stop on more leisurely outings. Sadly, it doesn't include a restaurant and hotel guide — an opportunity missed, perhaps.

As well as the map you get a few buttons which are used for manipulating the interface and setting up your

options. Naturally, if you drive at a steady 80mph on the open road then it'll make a big difference to travel times — just don't let the police see your copy of the program. Perhaps the only real drawback is that it doesn't allow you to set up preferences for more than one car or driver. If I want to take my rust-bucket Mini to Edinburgh, I'll probably expect different results than if I rev up the Kawasaki ZXR750, but I couldn't figure out a way to store both sets of preferences short of installing AutoRoute twice on my hard drive, which seems a bit of a waste of space.

Other than that, the program is excellent in plotting routes all round the country and beyond. It'll give you the route, a written plan, and a cost breakdown. You can print out maps to take with you, or better still, take a laptop if you have one.

▲ And here we are, the UK and Ireland. Whether you're going from Bangor to Berlin the whole of Europe's your oyster.

If you have a copy of the program up and running in the car, you can always alter the route as you drive — most useful if you turn on the radio and hear that a lorry has jack-knifed on one of the roads you intend to take.

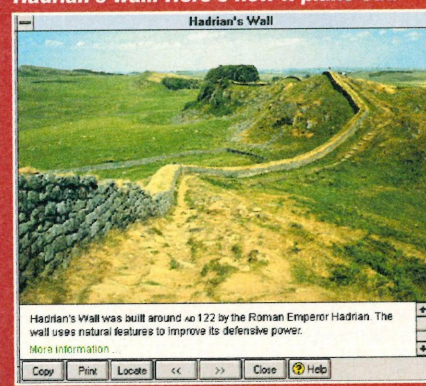
On the surface then, AutoRoute seems to be the answer to all your travel worries. But there are some omissions — petrol stations are not marked for instance.

Still, the only way you'll regret buying AutoRoute is if you haven't got a car, or if you've just been banned for ten years. For everything from doing the shopping to a fortnight's road trip around the continent, AutoRoute's a complete boon.

Continued on next page ►

We're all going on a summer holiday

OK, so it's not summer, and only I'm going, but I fancied a day trip and AutoRoute suggested historic Hadrian's Wall. Here's how it plans out:

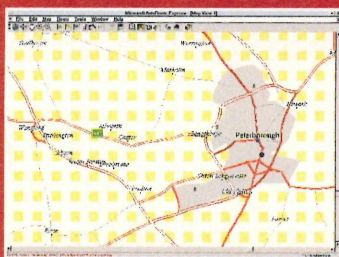


Hadrian's Wall

Northumberland consists of a coastal plain along the North Sea and an upland area of hills and moors inland. The Cheviot Hills extend along the Scottish border in the north. Agriculture and livestock raising are the chief occupations. In Northumberland are remains of Hadrian's Wall, constructed by the Romans in the 2nd century AD.

Microsoft (R) AutoRoute Express. Copyright (c) 1995 Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1994 Funk & Wagnalls Corporation.

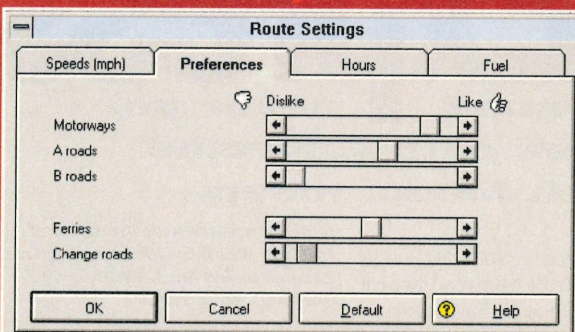
Seems like a nice enough place. Among all the tourist spots the program put forward, a trip up North is just the ticket.



First things first, let's find where I am... and there it is, sunny "Ailsworth", off the A47. AutoRoute automatically loses brownie points for not spelling the name of my home village right!



Next, I set up the start and end points for my exciting round trip, and check out the motorway network. Hmm... looks like it might be an A-road job. Next stage, letting it do the calculations.



Your preferences make a lot of difference when figuring out the best route. Personally I'm not a big fan of B-roads, preferring my roads to have a fast lane, and I'll not be having any truck with toll roads either. I pay my road tax good and proper, so I don't see why I should pay extra.



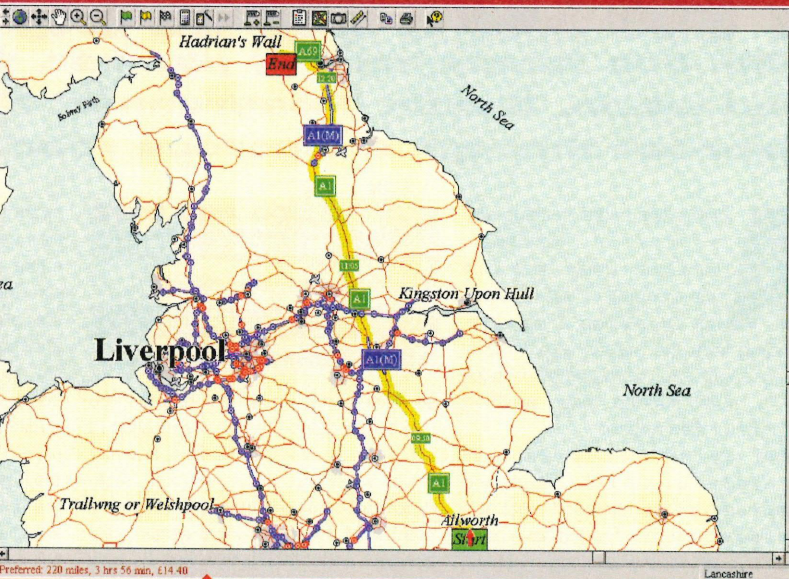
And now for the scores on the doors: This is the fastest route, by all accounts, and if I leave at 9am (I never was an early riser myself) then I'll be there at 12.56, just in time for a spot of lunch as luck would have it.

Statistics			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motorways	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A roads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B roads	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ferries
Distance driven	219.7 miles	As the crow flies	180.8 miles
Motorways	49.4 miles	B roads	8.5 miles
A roads	161.8 miles	Ferries	0.0 miles

I managed to make the trip in four hours and six minutes, using the route just shown. Not bad, really, over the distance.

Table: Preferred (220 miles, 3 hrs 56 min)							
Time	Dist.	Instruction	Road	For	Dir.	Towards	
09:00	0.0	DEPART Ailsworth (Cambridgeshire) on the	Local ro	¼ mile			
09:00	0.2	Take the	A47	1 mile	W		
09:02	1.3	Take the	A47	2 miles	W	Oadby	
09:04	2.7	Turn right onto	A1	73 miles	N	Stamford	
10:22	75.6	Stay on the	A1(M)	15 miles	N	M18 J2	
10:35	90.6	Stay on the	A1	73 miles	N	Pontefract	
11:47	163	At A1(M) stay on the	A1(M)	34 miles	N	Birtley	
12:20	197	At A1 (M) stay on the	A1	9 miles	NW	*Check access*	
12:33	206	Turn off onto	A69	5 miles	W	Corbridge	
12:40	211	Turn off onto	B6318	8 miles	S	Stamfordham	
12:55	218	Take the	B6318	½ mile	W		
12:56	219	Take the	Local ro	¼ mile			
12:56	219	ARRIVE Hadrian's Wall					

According to AutoRoute, my preferences would take me by this route, the quick one, and by thunder that's the way I'm going. See you soon....



Taking the shortest route, on the other hand, I wind up there a quarter of an hour later because of the blasted B-roads in the way. Nope, that doesn't sound any better.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Travel planner

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £49.99 HD/ £59.99 CD

Contact: (01734) 270001

PROS

Very accurate once you set it up for your preferences

CONS

Could do with a good pub and decent restaurant guide, plus those all essential petrol stations.

8

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EVA's maps are its weakest feature, with too few towns and cities, only two levels of zoom and a clumsy scrolling system. ▶

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, Wind 3.1

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible

ITN European Video Atlas

**And finally...
Gordon
Houghton
joins Trevor
McDonald on
a serious tour
of Europe.**

The collapse of Communism in Europe has been good news for cartographers. People who wouldn't normally buy more than one atlas in their lifetime have been panicked into purchasing annually-revised editions reflecting the newly-reunified Germany, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics and the constantly shifting boundaries in the Balkans.

This chaotic backdrop makes the ITN European Video Atlas (EVA) a timely release, and one which you would expect to throw some light on the confusion. Initial impressions are favourable: featuring housewives' favourite Trevor McDonald as host and guide, it tackles the new Europe with maps, videos, photographs and a wealth of data.

Good news, bad news

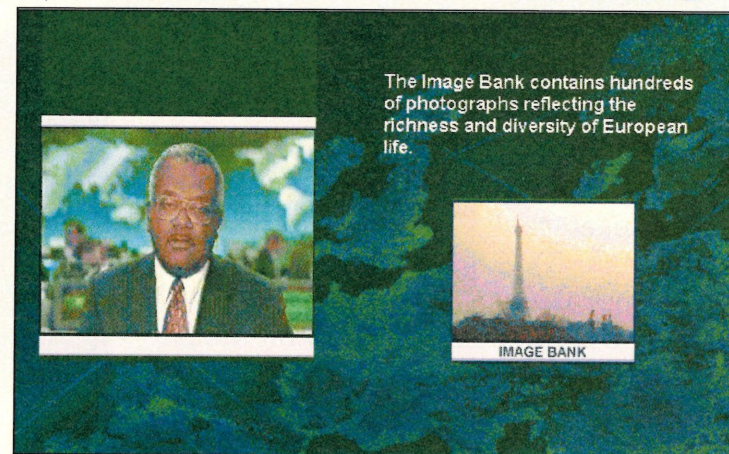
However, it only takes a cursory stroll through the main features to realise that some sections are better than others. The good news includes a data bank crammed with the kind of interesting facts you'd find in a gazetteer, ably supported by masses of statistics,

some nifty graphs and a useful comparison tool. Add to this an unusual spread of photos and you've got a promising start.

The bad news is that even though there are over 30 video sequences, many are often so well-known that they are almost not worth watching. If you haven't seen the Berlin Wall, Margaret Thatcher, Gorbachev or the Pope before, this is the place to start. Also, there are no video sequences for some less 'popular' countries such as Moldova, Estonia, San Marino and the Ukraine. More serious than either of these drawbacks are the low quality maps. They're poorly presented and simply aren't comprehensive enough, even taking into account that this is an overview of Europe.

There's little here that I hadn't seen before or couldn't learn from a gazetteer. The flexible multimedia tools which allow you to examine, compare, search for, print and copy whatever you like provide some incentive to buy — but, in the end, not enough.

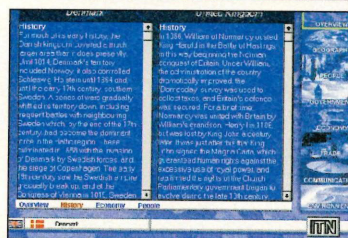
There's environmental information on every European nation. ▶



The Image Bank contains hundreds of photographs reflecting the richness and diversity of European life.



IMAGE BANK



▶ Trevor McDonald acts as your guide through the introduction and demo sequences.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: European Reference

Publisher: Attica

Price: £49.99

Contact: (01865) 791346

PROS

Comprehensive data on 45 nations with interesting photographs.

CONS

The maps aren't detailed enough and the selection of videos is predictable.

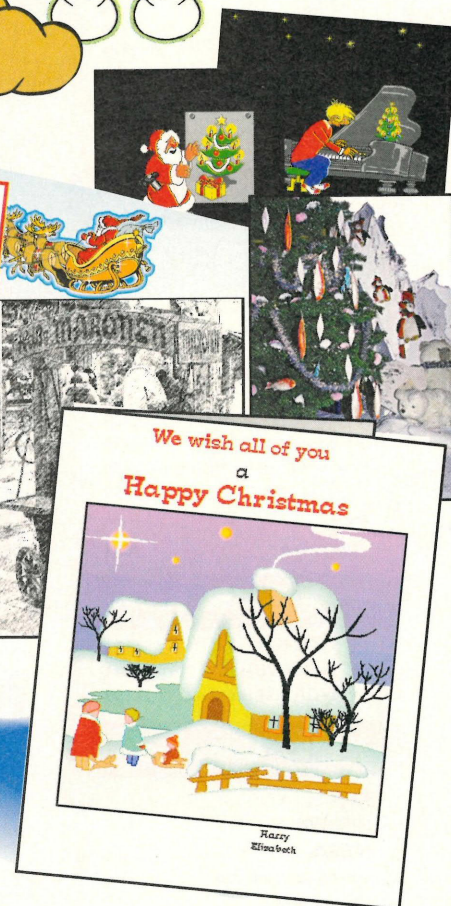
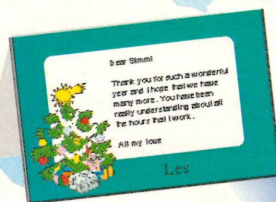
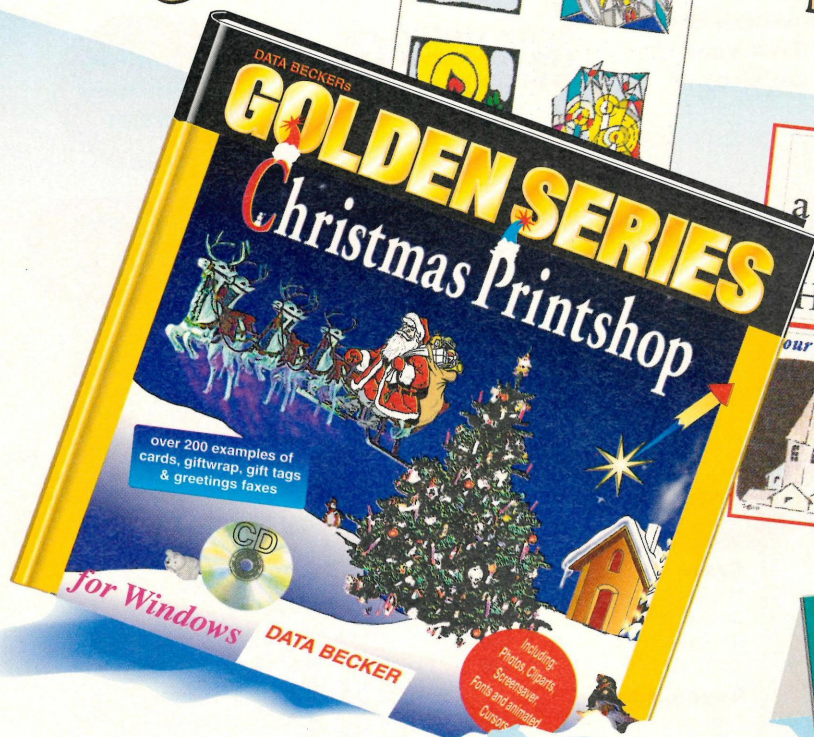
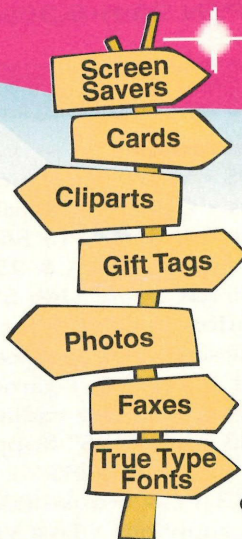
5

▶ EVA's video collection focuses on important political events and personalities in recent times. The range of photographs is more eclectic, combining rarely-seen images with major social changes.

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THE FERRARI LEGEND

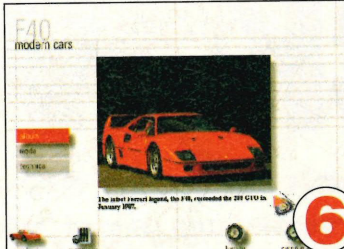
(Reference)



This CD-ROM is aimed at the sort of people who have posters of fast cars on their walls, books about fast cars on their coffee tables, but actually have an Austin Allegro in the garage. It consists of pictures of the various Ferrari models, engine specifications and a brief history of the company itself. The information is presented well, but it could have done with more

animations and video to give it an edge over glossy books on the same subject. Oh, and there's a quiz in which you have to match the engine noise to the car. Great.

Ocean, £TBA • (0161) 832 6633, 3486SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM • £24.99



6

THE PORSCHE LEGEND

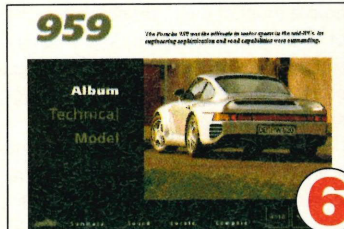
(Reference)



Much the same as the Ferrari Legend, except with Porsches instead of Ferraris. Lots of nice, glossy pictures of the cars, a brief history of the company and more than a few statistics (how many valves does a Porsche have etc). The quiz is also slightly better than the Ferrari effort — though you need an anal-retentive knowledge of Porsche engine parts to do well at it. Otherwise, it has the same shortcom-

ings as the Ferrari CD and it's worth noting that both CDs cover road cars only — race models are not included.

Ocean, £TBA • (0161) 832 6633 386SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM • £24.99



6

NEW YORK

(Educational)



First in a series of a new travel series, this CD-ROM offers the tourist a brief guide to New York City. It covers only Manhattan and Harlem — other districts such as Brooklyn and Queens are omitted — so it's not exactly definitive. Using a simplistic map, you can find the location of the main tourist attractions, places to shop, eat and stay. There are 39 video clips and 640 photographs of the various sights, and the whole package is presented in an attractive manner. However, the

amount of information it contains is fairly minimal, and a good book would provide a more useful guide.

Ocean, £TBA • (0161) 832 6633 3486SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM • £19.99



5

MATISSE, ARAGON, PROKOFIEV

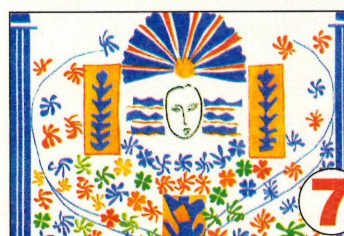
(Reference)



A strange piece of multimedia, this. It examines the paintings of Matisse, Prokofiev's music and the poetry of Aragon, allowing you to explore the themes that link them together. You can look at the paintings or read the poems while listening to the music, or look at the paintings while listening to the poetry. The whole thing is well presented — the paintings have been reproduced nicely and the music is

excellent. Unfortunately, the poetry is pretentious and rather spoils the overall feel of this innovative CD.

Ocean, £TBA • (0161) 832 6633 3486SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM • £24.99



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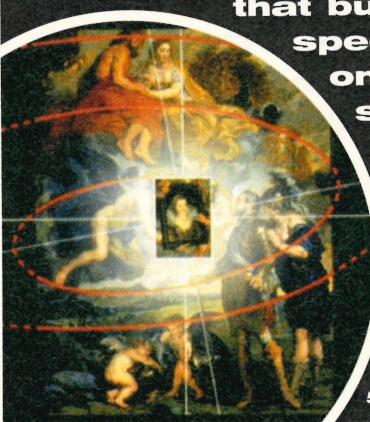
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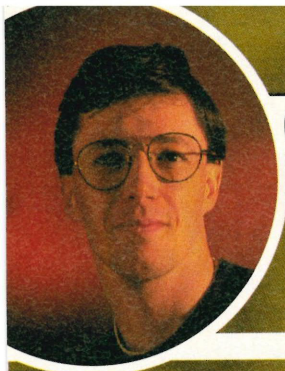
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GET SERIOUS **round up**

Yet another month has passed us by, Christmas draws ever closer and what feels like a million and one new PC products have come through the PC Review offices for testing. This month we've seen the fastest PC yet from Dan, six of the fastest graphics cards ever, several Windows 95 products, a low cost voice mail system and a new printer from HP. Following on from this, to celebrate this our 50th issue, there's 50 of your most common Q&A problems solved too.

Andy Leaning

High Lights



Xara Studio ... 131

HP Desk 660C ... 137

MS Works ... 139

Quick, Quick, Video



EMAP Labs check out six graphics cards to speed up the graphics and video display of your PC.

Diamond Stealth 64 Video

Diamond has been so successful with its video cards (which first appeared on the scene a few years ago), it sometimes seems that almost every other machine seems to have one inside. Quite rightly too, if the company's new video range is anything to go by.

What you get here is an excellently engineered card that performs well. Among sixteen individual tests we ran, it only scored really poorly in one, averagely in a couple, and was right up there on the winner's podium for the rest, generally sharing the honours with the Matrox.

Better than all that, though, is the way the whole bundle is put together. You put down your money (a very reasonable amount) and you get a card and some of the best utility features you'll find. In Windows the In-Control Tools make setup and differing configurations a cinch, covering everything from virtual desktops to resolution, colour depth and refresh rates for your monitor.

The only fly in the ointment was the fact that these same tools were a pain to fully uninstall, but since you won't need to do that too often, with an excellent card like this in your machine this isn't a major problem.



Price: £235

Supplier: Panrix

Contact: 01132 444958

Score: 9

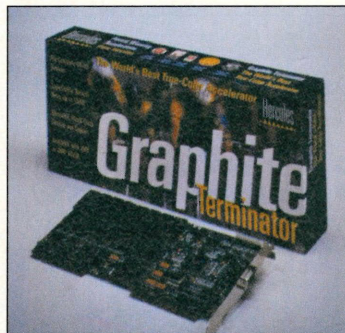


Hercules Terminator Pro

In many ways, Hercules is the granddaddy of graphics cards. It has been doing stand alone, hi-res cards since before most of the competition was out of its corporate nappies. These days it still manages to keep up with the best of its rivals with good solid technology at decent prices.

The Terminator Pro is a good card from the viewpoint that it achieved fair to average results in testing, but this hides a big discrepancy in various categories. Even using the Speedy tests the Terminator Pro posted brilliant scores in Windows 3.11 and positively lousy results in Windows 95 — and Hercules wrote the tests!

Other than that, the front end interface to the utilities suite was very easy to get along with, which was guaranteed to make friends. The utilities themselves were par for the course, but nicely presented. Less pleasant was the fact that the card was far longer than a PCI card should be, and it simply may not fit in some computers that count on PCI bus cards being a standard length. This doesn't affect the other bus versions, where long cards are expected, but seemed unnecessary to us.



Price: £348

Supplier: Imago Micros

Contact: 01635 861122

Score: 7

Matrox MGA Millennium

There was something superbly professional about the Matrox card. It was well designed, with a modular approach so that you can upgrade it later as needed to MPEG or whatever. It was well-built and well-bundled for user-friendliness and quality. It was fast. What more could anybody want?

Well, let's put the rose-tinted specs away for a moment, shall we? What this undoubtedly is, is a very nice graphics card. What it's not is perfect. The design is excellent, and the upgradability is nice, but you're paying for that privilege. The good bundle and build quality is only marginally better than the excellent quality offered by most of the players here. The speed was impressive, but it didn't storm away with any test, and actually managed lacklustre results at best in Windows 3.11 and while testing video acceleration.

Certain cards cost you the same amount, but don't boast the features or the same overall benchmark. For that the MGA Millennium is very nearly our top choice. Unfortunately the Diamond card offered better features for less, if it hadn't been for the Diamond card the Matrox card would probably have won this round-up.



Price: £235

Supplier: Panrix

Contact: 01132 444958

Score: 9

PCREVIEW

Technical Award

Phew, this was a tough call to make! The performances were excellent across the board, and just go to show how good these newer graphics cards are getting. The Diamond and Matrox both managed to be somewhat better on features and performance than the others, and so the award's down to one of them, but really the Diamond has to get it for offering better value for money — remember, Matrox supplied us with its 4Mb card and it performed only as well as the Diamond's 2Mb kit.

Orchid Fahrenheit Pro 64

The Fahrenheit Pro 64 is actually not the very latest card from Orchid, but the company's new cards weren't ready for us to test at the time, so we (perhaps unfairly, but Orchid seemed confident enough in their product to enter their card here) put the older card up against the latest from the competition.

Under the circumstances, it's amazing that the Fahrenheit Pro 64 managed to keep up. Its test results were mediocre overall, with a couple of categories where it was just edged to the bottom of the heap, but it was within a few percent of the others, matching the SPEA and Hercules most of the time.

As a card it suffers from excess length like the Terminator Pro, but has nothing wrong with it otherwise. The chipset is a little long in the tooth now, but the new cards apparently won't have this. The software was decent, and easy to get running, too.

On this performance we think Orchid could easily have used its current cards until 1996 and nobody would have had a really bad deal out of buying one. However, its new generation of cards is already there waiting in the wings and although we couldn't road test the Fahrenheit Video, by the time you read this you will be able to. If the Orchid is anything to go by, it should be good.



Price: £369

Supplier: Orchid (Europe) Ltd

Contact: 01256 479898

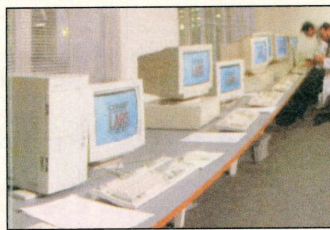
Score: 7

The PC Review Labs Bench Tests

This month we tested six graphics cards for raw speed, multimedia handling and general performance. We also checked to see how they fared in real world use. To measure performance in this last category a test program called BAPCo was employed. Using a battery of tests BAPCo simulates a user doing all sorts of real things on a Windows 3.11 computer (word-processing, spreadsheeting, or whatever).

We ran the video tests of MPC Wizard, designed by SoftKey, under both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 to analyse the video acceleration features of the various cards with particular interest in multimedia applications using Video for Windows or MPEG.

Finally we ran Speedy from Hercules, which specifically examines the technical side of things. Eight tests are run



simultaneously in different windows, and when collated the results give us an overall rating which sums up the pixels/second that the cards can shift.

To make sure the tests were fair, we used the same two Pentium PCs throughout, with their original graphics cards removed and our test cards inside. One machine ran BAPCo, while the other

slaved over the remaining tests. We went through all the Windows 3.11 tests first, and then clean installed Windows 95 for the second half of the tests.

At every stage we tested the cards at different colour depths and resolutions, giving us a good overview of how they handled different situations, so whether you run in VGA at 256 colours or 1024x768 at 16.7 million colours we've taken that into account when testing.

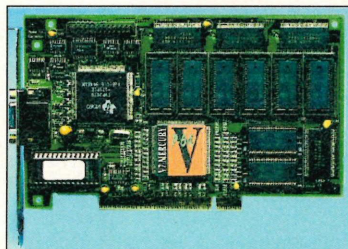
SPEA V7-Mercury

The V7-Mercury immediately blew any brownie points it might have been about to build up, because it failed some of our tests. BAPCo are industry tests and its failing them didn't bode well. Not a good start.

Where it did run, the results it posted were a mixed bag. Technical speed was impressive in both Windows 95 and Windows 3.11 but video acceleration was poor in both environments, and the real world tests didn't run.

The software supplied contained decent, good utilities. The hardware wasn't the neatest design, but acceptable. Added to this is a poor manual covering just hardware, not the software. It would have been nice to have some details about the card at least! All round, an average performance in all senses.

The advantage of SPEA is definitely the price, and with a variety of other cards to choose from in their range (of which the Mercury is actually the most expensive) you can always find something for your budget. SPEA are definitely hitting the budget market hard here, just a shame about the performance. In the end if price is your primary concern and you're not too worried about having the fastest, all singing and dancing video card, it's worth a look.



Price: £210

Supplier: SPEA Software AG

Contact: 01844 261886

Score: 5

VideoLogic GrafixStar 700

VideoLogic have gone for the same modular approach to the GrafixStar 700 as Matrox deal with the MGA Millennium. You can add in bits at a later date, if you want TV cards, video capture or MPEG playback on-board. The basic version weighs in at an attractive £275, which includes the most generous of the warranties from any of the cards tested.

To balance this, Windows 95 performance was certainly disappointing, leaving it to acquit itself as a Windows 3.11/DOS card. Here it did fine, above average in many areas, but simply not well enough to justify putting it up there with the Matrox and Diamond offerings in the final conclusion.

The software was very middle of the road, not lacking anything, but neither having anything exceptional. Quality was fair, both in hardware build and software included, and when put together with the other factors it leaves the GrafixStar 700 pushing the top end of average without actually managing to break into the heavy-weight class of graphics cards. With a little bit more thought the GrafixStar could be a contender.



Price: £275

Supplier: VideoLogic

Contact: 01923 260511

Score: 8

Tech talk

Confused by technical terms? Follow our bluffers guide to the latest buzz words.

Resolution: The amount of pixels on the screen. This higher the better. 320x200 is VGA, used by most games. SVGA is about double in both directions, meaning four times as many pixels - hence why so many games run so slowly in this mode. In Windows you'll most likely use 800x600 or 1024x768.

Colour depth describes the number of colours you'll get out of a graphics card. The three levels 8-bit, 16-bit, and 24-bit mean you'll see 256, 65000 or 16.7 million colours, respectively, at once. 24-bit is also known as 'true-colour', and although it's very realistic it contains much more information for the same image than 8-bit so it's slower. The Colour depth supportable at a given resolution depends on the amount of RAM on a card.

RAM: Each graphic card has RAM on-board to temporarily hold the pictures being displayed. Different types exist, with VRAM being the Michael Schumacher to DRAM's Damon Hill. But you will pay more for VRAM. Other types are starting to appear will WRAM in the Matrox card.

Bus: This states how the graphics card talks to the rest of the computer. Once again, it's a choice of three: ISA, VL, and PCI. ISA was the original and is still used a lot and although originally it was only 8-bit, is now a 16-bit bus, meaning you get your data across to and from the processor twice as fast. VL is a fast 16-bit bus, much better than ISA, but dying out slowing with the introduction of PCI. PCI is a newish 32-bit bus, faster than VL, but you won't find it on all motherboards. Get the best Bus type card your PC supports.



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- G15 **ALIENS ATE MY BABYSITTER** (1)
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 G29 **DARK AGES** (1)
 G30 **30,000 WORD DICTIONARY & ANAGRAM FINDER** (1)
 G31 **TANK WARS** (1)
 G32 **SCRAMBLE** (1)
 G33 **JOYSTICK GAMES** (1)
 G81 **PGA GOLF** PGA golf game, sample 3 notes on this game (2)
 G82 **BUST** latest puzzle game, very good graphics (1)
 G83 **JIGSAW PUZZLE** excellent graphics (2)
 G84 **ARMY 12** strategy board game. Mouse needed! (1)
 G85 **BATTLE GROUND** action/strategy game (1)
 G86 **CONQUEST v1.7** world conquering strategy game (1)
 G87 **LANDSLIP** strategy game, bid for electoral votes (1)
 G88 **DICE** new game, VGA, mouse required (1)
 G89 **AIKEN** horoscope, mindreader, fortune tellingm etc. Very good (1)
 G90 **ARKANOID** good arcade type of game (1)
 G91 **BABBLE!** a game for people who talk a lot (1)
 G92 **MARBLEMAN** brilliant arcade/board game (1)
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 G94 **CUNNING FOOTBALL v4.5** good fun, latest version (1)
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 G100 **CROSSWORD GAME** very extensive! (2)
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 G103 **DANGEROUS DAVE** awesome VGA game (1)
 G104 **D. DUCK** Donald Duck arcade game (1)
 G105 **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** (1)
 G106 **DRAGON HUNT** a graphics oriented game (1)
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WINDOWS

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Windows 95

the truth is out there...

Does Windows 95 live up to Microsoft's own hopes? Peter Horton compares the finished product to the Seattle giants own reviews' guide.

CD AND DISK
Minimum PC: 486, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: All Windows comp.

In the bible according to Microsoft, Windows 95 is the future. Partly the financial future for them, and mainly the future of the way we use PCs. Its birth may not have been the smoothest, but the day-one clamour for copies was immense — as were the rumours of it being a rush-job, accompanied by threatened legal action over Microsoft Network. We could have added to Microsoft's woes by reviewing the new product immediately, but instead we waited until we knew the program inside-out so we could offer the most thorough, searching examination of the package everybody will be using.

To sift fact from fiction, deduce whether Windows 95 was all Microsoft wanted it to be and whether it's exactly the revolution promised. We've based our review on "Introducing Microsoft Windows 95 — The Next Generation of Microsoft Windows" — a book written in conjunction with the Windows 95 team and sent out as reviewers notes with the Beta versions of 95. Because it was produced before the software was launched, this book gives us the clearest view of what Microsoft was aiming to do and what it actually did.

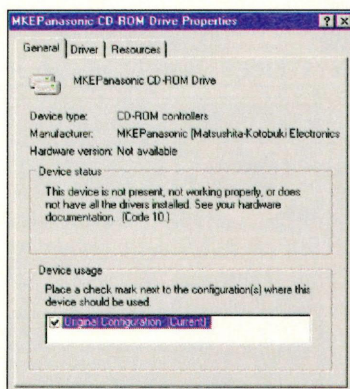


Key objectives

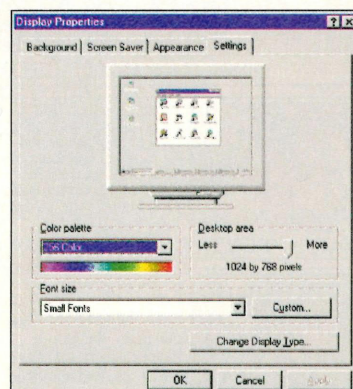
The objectives for Windows 95, as listed in the book, were ease of use, speed, power, and compatibility. The key one there is ease of use. Microsoft has always aimed to cure techno-fear with its software and with this it kills the biggest terror of all — DOS.

We discovered that inexperienced PC users found the Windows 95 interface far easier to learn than previous Windows incarnations — no surprise there. What did make us raise an eyebrow was that experienced Windows users actually took a while to get into it. This usually boiled down to over-familiarity with previous versions of Windows, then being confronted with an interface far more like the Mac OS.

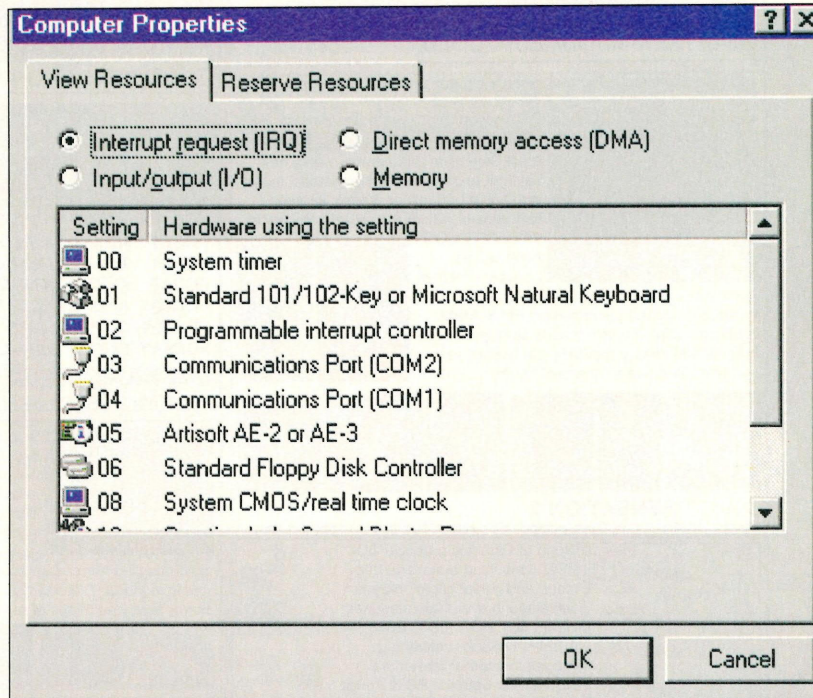
Although everyone agrees it's immeasurably easier to use, there are still a few confusing elements. The task bar, for example, is supposed to help avoid multiple copies of applications and windows being opened. It does this by showing the name of every open window and application along the bottom of the screen, so you can see what's already open. There's one problem though, the window's name precedes the application's, so you're often left with two identical references. Conversely, control panel programs and properties don't show on it at all. The net result, though, is too many buttons, similarly named buttons or no buttons at all for open windows.



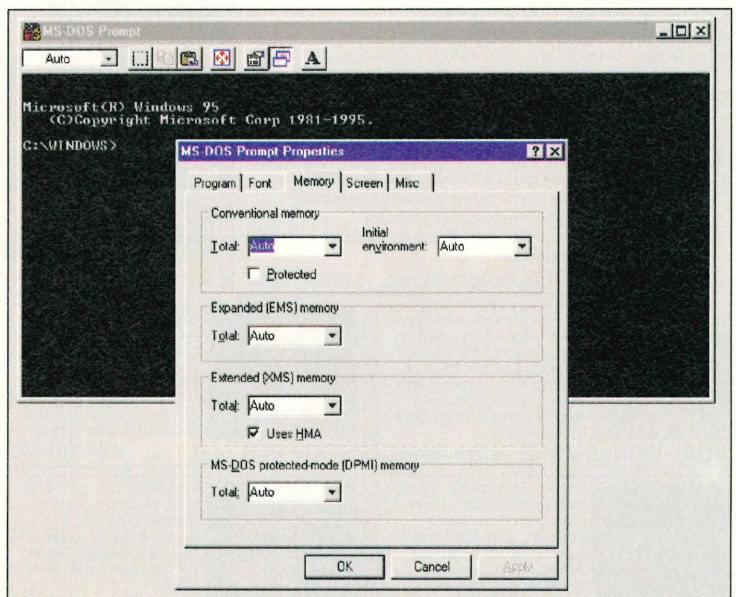
▲ Even though errors are described to you, chances are you still won't understand them.



▲ Changing the screen mode still means a reboot — even if it didn't in the beta versions.




▲ You can get a complete list of what is installed in your system and what IRQ numbers, DMA channels etc are in use — but this is only accurate if the devices really are using the numbers shown! If they're not then it's a case of getting inside and changing jumpers.



▲ You can run many MS-DOS applications in a window and setting up how they run is just a matter of filling in the blanks. It's certainly less fiddly than changing an Autoexec.bat file.

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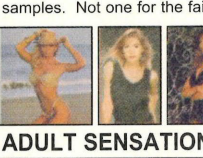


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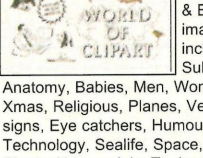
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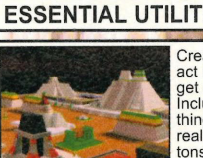
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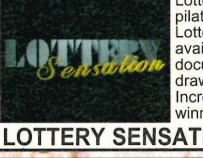
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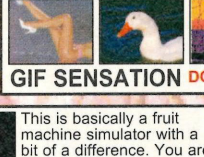
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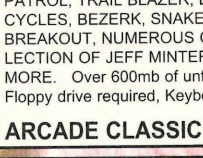
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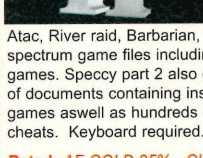
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Apart from the user interface, which is undeniably the best in any PC operating system, the rest of the enhancements are behind the scenes. Perhaps the most important of these is Plug 'n' Play — otherwise known as PnP. For hardware and software developers alike this is one of the most important features of 95. This is tied into Wizards, small background applications which are supposed to perform basic tasks. In this case the installation Wizard detects new hardware and cross-references it with a database, theoretically eliminating the need to set IRQs and DMAs. At the moment there's very little dedicated PnP hardware which negates this, but within the next few years, once manufacturers start following the standards set by Microsoft (and others behind PnP), installation hassles should be a thing of the past.

Foreseeing the shortage of specific PnP hardware, Microsoft even made it easier to install common non-PnP boards. The new Hardware Wizard does its best to detect the settings of your latest card, and even if it fails, or gets it wrong (surprisingly frequently), the device manager makes manually configuring the settings much easier.



All-new horrors

For all its Wizards and simple menus, less common hardware can pose a problem for Windows 95 and novice users. When it comes to the crunch and the software can't detect a piece of hardware, it resorts to checking the Config.sys and Autoexec.bat files. If you know what you're doing it's easy enough to edit these and put the right configuration lines in, or drop to DOS and let the installation software take care of things. But if this is your first time with a system which is supposedly DOS-free, you could be in trouble.

A major problem can occur with Sound Blaster compatible cards. Many don't actually use jumpers, but are configured through software instead — and these drivers have to be loaded in the

Autoexec and Config files. What actually happens though, is that Windows 95 detects a Sound Blaster card, gives you the IRQ and DMA settings and informs you that everything's OK. In reality you get no sound and no explanation why. On top of that many use specific Windows drivers, designed for 3.1 or earlier, which won't be compatible with 95. The saving grace here is that most new machines with 95 pre-installed do come with soundcards that are either common makes or recognised by the hardware Wizard.

But despite these initial hassles, there's no denying that in the very near future Windows 95's PnP facilities will make life vastly easier for everyone. For the first time we'll have PCs which automatically configure themselves to work with new hardware so soon. You'll have no worries about fiddling around with settings and installing drivers for both DOS and Windows.



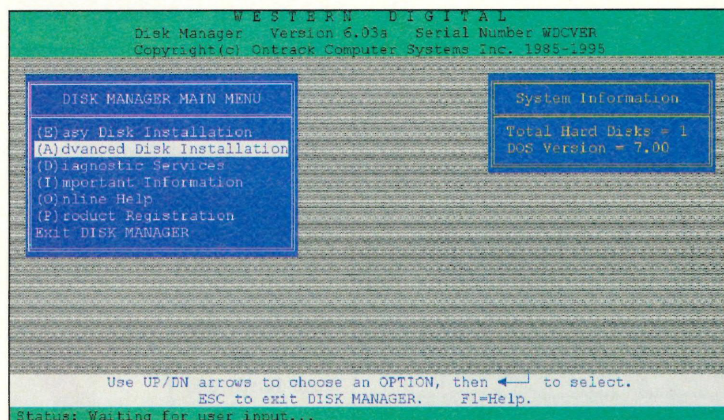
Speed and power

Possibly the biggest claim made about Windows 95 is that it's the first true 32-bit operating system. This means that, in theory, it makes use of your PC in the optimum capacity, which will boost its speed.

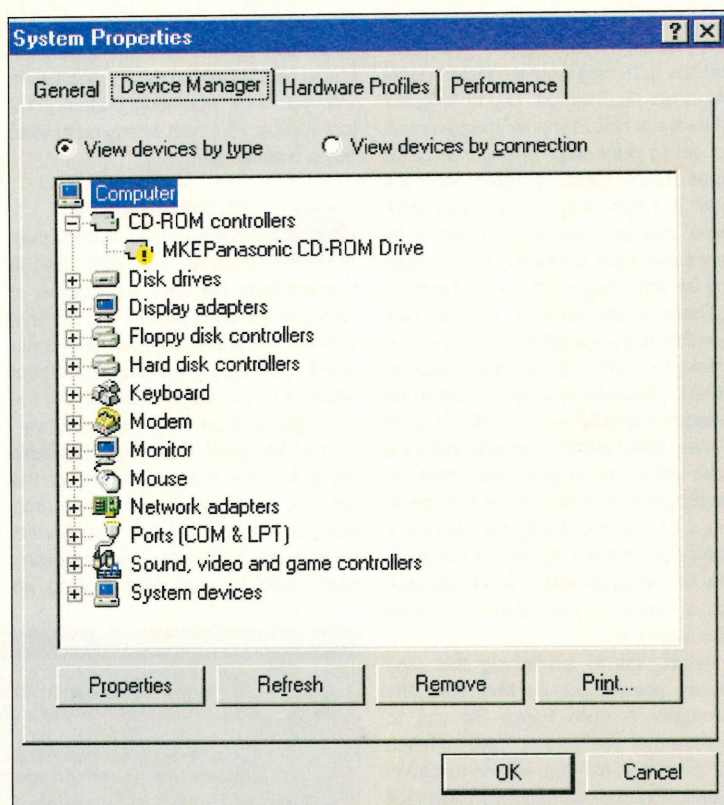
Unfortunately it's worked in the opposite manner. Certainly, if you're running a fairly powerful base machine with at least 8Mb of RAM there are benefits. However, most people have found that with anything less the performance isn't any better than Windows 3.11 — which includes 32-bit drivers of its own, several of which have resurfaced in 95. The upshot is, if you want more performance out of your PC with Windows 95, you're going to have to shell out extra for the RAM to do so.

This is in slight contradiction to Microsoft's original claim. To quote from the book: "Windows 95 must run on a base platform of an Intel 80386DX-based computer with 4Mb of RAM and

Run any program in the Control Panel and it doesn't appear on the task bar.



▲ You still might need software like Ontrack's Drive Manager unless your machine's BIOS and disk controller are recognised by Windows 95. But that isn't always the case.



▲ The Device Manager will show you if anything isn't working properly by a yellow exclamation mark. What it doesn't do is offer you a solution. From then on, you're on your own.

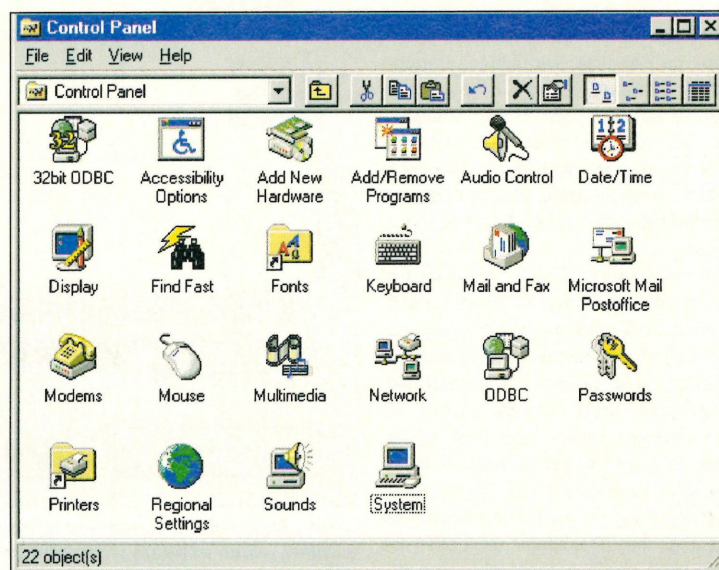
provide access to new features and functionality without requiring an upgrade of existing hardware or the addition of more RAM.

In our opinion you'd be mad to try and run Windows 95 on that spec, or with 4Mb of RAM. The old 386DX series just doesn't have enough power to cope with an operating system that large running it. Although it will work, the speed you're sacrificing to get it up and running means you'd probably be better off with DOS.

On top of that, regardless of what system you own, 8Mb is pretty much the minimum memory spec you need. While Windows just about runs

respectably well in 4Mb, once you start running applications through, that's when the problems soon start. If you really want 95 to enhance your PC, we recommend 12Mb. It's at this point that the performance becomes noticeably better than if you were running the same programs under DOS or Win 3.11. That's still no cure for 386 owners, though. No matter how much RAM you belt into your system, it won't make any significant difference. Still, there isn't much in the way of new software that will run on a system that old.

One of the key problems with optimised 32-bit software that really isn't Microsoft's fault is that much of it is still



designed to run on older systems. So don't be surprised if many of your applications run only slightly faster under Windows 95. The real key to speedier software is time. Time for programmers to get to grips with writing true 32-bit apps, a new operating system, learn the way it works and, most importantly, have enough dedicated Windows 95 users out there to make it worth releasing 95-only versions of their software.

Don't be disheartened by this. One way things are speeded up is in the multitasking. Switching between applications in Windows 95 is simple, and if one crashes it usually doesn't pull the entire system down with it — at least that's the case with 32-bit applications. Older 16-bit programs still have a habit of throwing a few spanners into the works, but unless you haven't bothered to upgrade any of your applications in the last couple of years, you shouldn't encounter any problems.

Again, this is something that isn't clearly pointed out by Microsoft. The company is quite happy for you to believe that you'll never have to reach for that CTRL-ALT-DEL key combination again. Windows 95 can crash and lock you out thanks to certain applications. But on the whole, it's a world apart from using older versions of Windows and slamming the keyboard in frustration because one package has gone down taking a couple of others with it.



Compatibility

Software compatibility, especially with games, isn't a problem. Although this is due in part to being able to reboot your system in DOS mode. Quite a few DOS games simply won't run under 95, so you're forced to reboot your machine. But when you compare those to the amount of games which wouldn't run under 3.11 (like, almost all of them) it's still a minor God-send.

It's still not quite a gaming utopia though. We spent hours trying to network Command and Conquer through Windows 95 and gave up in the end. It took us less than five minutes through DOS. Strangely, though, it seems that games software does take advantage of Win 95 more than most current applications. Quite a few titles do run noticeably faster, which is some small compensation for having a few which just won't run at all.

A real surprise, though, is the lack of compatibility between Windows 3.1 software and Win 95. Quite a few applications simply won't run at all, while others play-up and become unpredictable. They might crash, sometimes features are disabled. Unlike DOS applications, there's no way to get around this. If that makes you unsure about upgrading to Windows 95, get hold of our November issue as the CD contains a list of all the programs that are compatible with 95.

The last thing you want is to find out that your most commonly used application has to be trashed because it won't work with your new operating system. That just adds to your cost when you have to buy a replacement.



Unfinished?

What surprised us more than anything was that several features from the Beta test version of Windows 95 didn't make it into the final version. In the test software you could switch between video modes without rebooting, but that's changed in the packaged version. Likewise, the full version of Microsoft Exchange has been cut-down. For example, many of the network utilities no longer offer a drop down list of machines you can connect to and the telephone dialler doesn't seem able to cope with dialling an

exchange or a Mercury PIN code. What wound us up more than anything was that Paint, the replacement for Paintbrush, no longer saves PCX files.

It's these changes, and the speed at which the final version followed the Beta that helps give the impression that Windows 95 was rushed out. The rumours have been going around for ages, everything from allegations that the packaging was labelled "95" so they had to put it out, to more cynical theories such as Microsoft wanting to get its latest baby out in 95 so we could all buy 96 next year. Whatever the case, you can tell that Windows 95 is far from a perfect operating system, the real question is, do you need it?

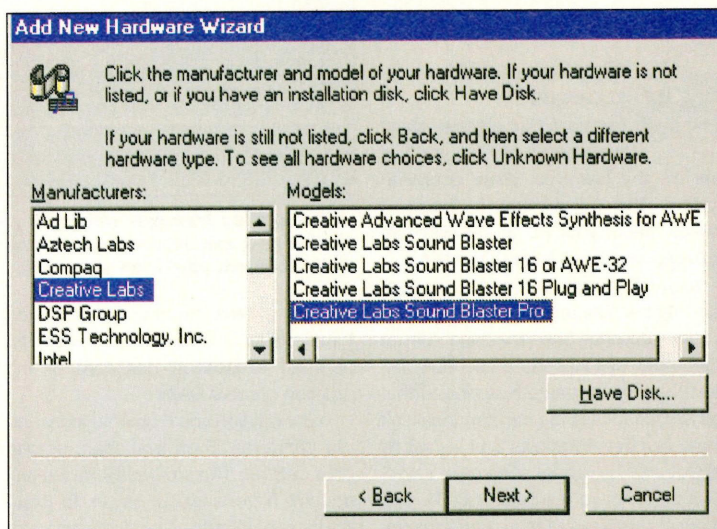
Hit or miss?

When all the factors are considered — and there are just too many to mention

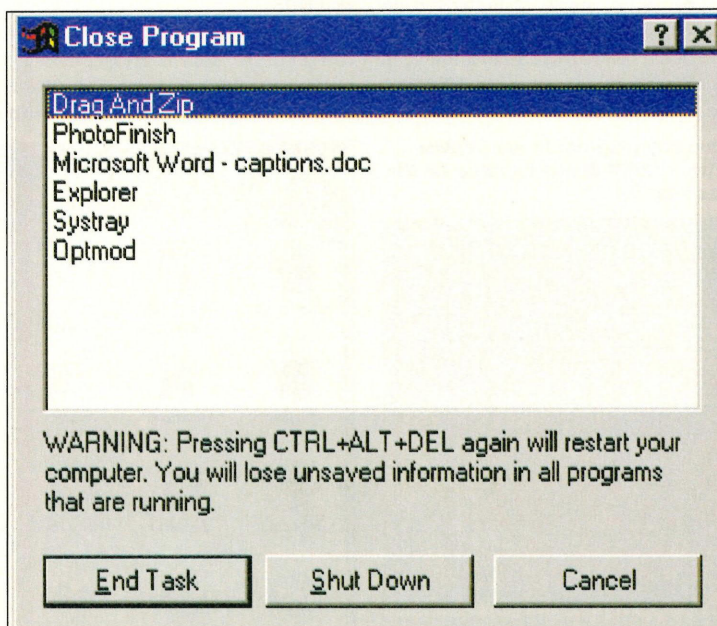
here, Windows 95 is as good as it is bad. There's no doubting that it takes a huge amount of hassle out of using a PC, and is far easier for new users to get to grips with than the neolithic form of DOS, but then it isn't exactly the next generation of Microsoft windows — as the company claims. It's hard to tell whether we're victims of hype who expected too much, or Microsoft genuinely failed to live up to its promises. What is clear is that this is the first step to much bigger things. But like so many first steps it's a faltering one. I don't think we'll truly see the 'next-generation' of operating system until hardware and software manufacturers are working to a common standard. Once we reach that point technology we'll all be heading down the shops for Windows 2000...

In the meantime, we can't help but feel slightly disappointed by Windows 95. It could have been so much more impressive. But there comes a point where development has to end and the business of selling the software starts. It took Microsoft until Windows 3.11 to get things right in that form, so don't expect to see the death of the DOS prompt in the immediate future.

What's strangest of all about the Windows 95 saga is that it's probably the lowest scoring essential buy ever. You don't really have a choice when it comes to upgrading. It's as inevitable as your processor going out of date. Whatever operating system you're using at the moment has been superseded by a program which hasn't lived up to expectations but is still going to be the system everybody develops for. You can hold out for a while, but in the end you'll have to make the break and bring Microsoft's new world to your PC. And if your machine's not up to scratch, a whole lot of new kit too.



▲ **It may be a Wizard but it isn't always right about what hardware you have and it doesn't always install everything necessary to make it work. Don't be tricked into thinking it makes everything easy.**



▲ **Keeping rogue programs under control is the job of the Close Program window which appears when you press Ctrl-Alt-Del. It's handy for keeping windows running when an application crashes.**

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Operating system

System requirements:

486DX, 8Mb RAM minimum

Ease of use:

A lot better than Windows 3!

Performance:

Disappointing. Much more demanding of hardware, but little improvement in real terms.

Value for money:

Good, but remember that it's not just the cost of Windows you'll need to pay.

You'll also need to upgrade your hardware and applications too.

7

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Xara Studio

Pat Fox straps on his ten-gallon hat takes a look at the fastest draw (geddit?!) in the west.

Price: £TBA

Manufacturer: Corel

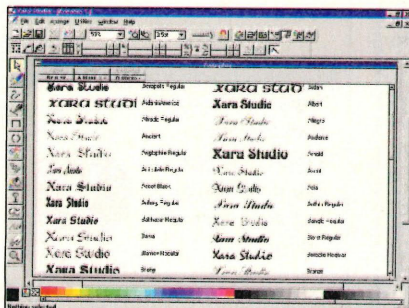
Contact: (0800) 581028

One of the problems that has plagued Windows graphics applications in the past has been that, unless you have a truly mighty PC, they will run very slowly indeed. Of course the programmers blame this on Windows itself, Microsoft blames poor programming, and all the while, the poor old end user gets stuck with applications that run like a dead sloth.

Xara Studio, however, is an exception to this rule. Optimised 32-bit code means that, even when running on a relatively low-end machine (ie a 486) Xara Studio manages to perform complex operations with frightening speed. A variety of graded fills styles can be implemented, objects can be made transparent, or "morphed" from one object to another, you can add perspective or bend an object in dozens of different ways – and all this within the twinkling of an eye.

The price is right

So what's the catch? Well, Xara is never going to win a direct comparison of features: CorelDRAW! 6 (reviewed last issue, rated 9), for example, not only gives you a structured drawing package, but also includes a suite of other graphics utilities that Xara just cannot match. But on its own terms, Xara Studio proves to be a worthy contender; if you want all the different applications that come with CorelDRAW!, then you must pay the price, but if you compare Xara Studio with CorelDRAW! itself, then it all becomes much clearer. Xara is simpler, faster, and includes virtually all the same features.



▲ A combination of graded fills and transparency effects make this car look rather fabulous.

The interface is of the now-standard buttons and toolbars variety, that you'll see on just about every graphics package released these days, and is entirely simple to use once you have learned the icons. If you have any difficulties, the on-line help is sufficiently detailed and sensibly arranged enough to answer your queries. But if you're still stuck, then the manual is very well-written and friendly, although perhaps a little patronising if you've done this sort of thing before.

The program also comes with a CD crammed with clipart and fonts, all arranged thematically in order to help you to locate your desired

▲ Fonts, everywhere... Xara comes with more typefaces than you could possibly use.

▲ Just a few of Xara studios more impressive effects, in action.

typeface or image. The clipart in particular is of excellent quality — needless to say I didn't knock up that image of an AC Cobra myself! There is support for CorelDRAW! and Adobe Illustrator files, and numerous other bitmap formats.

I would conclude that Xara Studio is a capable and supremely well-written package, easily powerful enough for most peoples' needs. At this price (around £200) you could get your hands on an older version of CorelDRAW!, but why would you want to? Back in issue 46 when I previewed Xara Studio, I suggested that it might be the David that would slay the giant Corel, but it seems that I was wrong. Why? Because Corel thought it was so good, they waded Victor Kiam-like, bought the rights and are marketing it themselves (as Corel Xara). I'll leave it to you to draw your own conclusions as to why they might wish to do that...



PCR VERDICT

Category:
Structured drawing package

System requirements:
486DX, 8Mb RAM, Windows 3.1, CD-ROM

Ease of use:
Not difficult at all, and the manual is genuinely helpful.

Performance:
What can I say? Faster than a very fast thing with rockets strapped to it.

Value for money:
If you want the best structured drawing package around, this is it, and at this price it's a certifiable bargain.

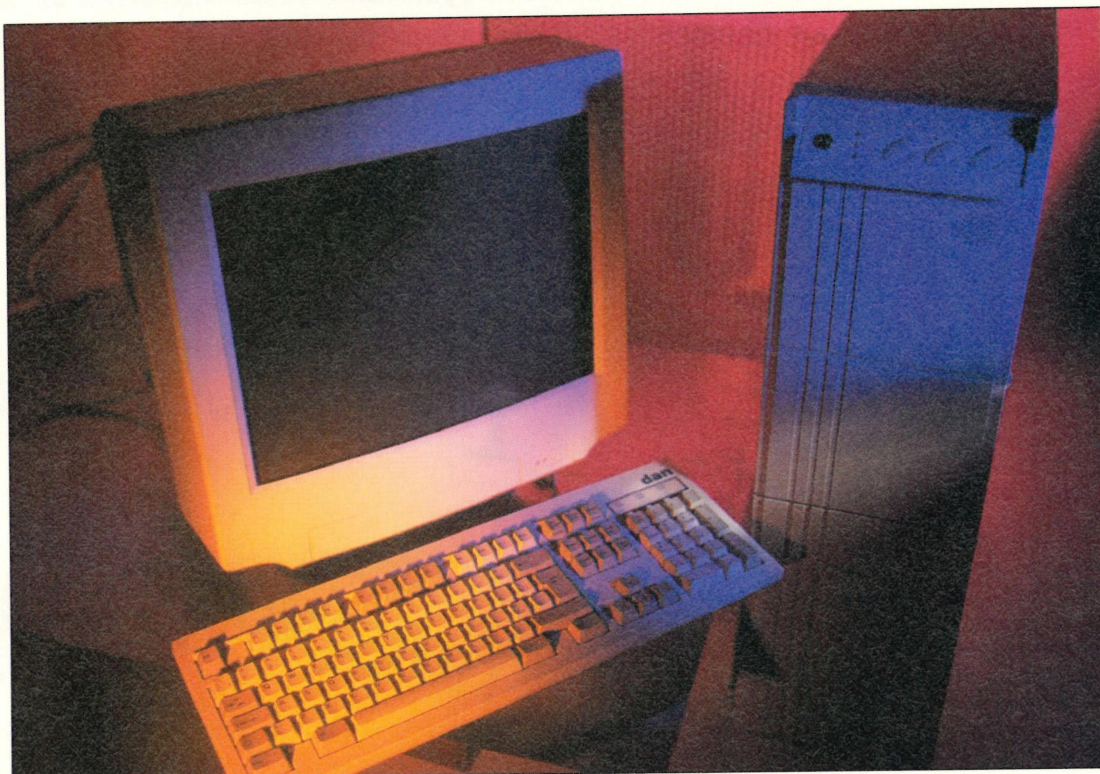
9

Dan Ultimate^{PC 133}

The Dan Ultimate PC is, in essence, a PC designed for users who know that they want a power machine, but don't want to pay for it. And considering what you get in this system it does seem to meet this challenge.

Inside the case is a 133MHz Intel Pentium, 16Mb of EDO RAM (which stands for Extended Data Out — and is roughly 20 per cent faster than normal DRAM), a 1Gb EIDE hard drive, and a quad speed CD-ROM drive. For serious power you won't find much better.

These core components are complemented with a Creative Labs AWE32 sound card, a Diamond Stealth 64 VRAM graphics card, a V32 fax-modem, and an NE2000 network card. This lot combine to provide everything you could want in a system from scratch, using some of the best components available. In particular the Diamond graphics card with its S3 Vision968 processor and 2Mb VRAM memory delivers pictures to the supplied 17" Trinitron XGA monitor faster than any other card we've seen (these two combined have to be seen to be believed).



For demanding games and power applications you want something bigger than average. David Keens has got just such a PC, the fastest system ever to grace PC Review.

Future expansion is provided by way of a PCI Trinitron motherboard, a Plug 'n' Play compatible Award Bios, internal space for two extra 5.25" drives and a 200W power supply. Even the 16Mb RAM is fitted as two 8Mb SIMMs, leaving two spare sockets. In the unlikely event you need to expand this system in the near future (given the wealth of hardware provided with it) you won't have a problem fitting extra stuff inside.

To get you using all the features of its

Price: £2529

Supplier: Dan

Contact: 0181 830 1100

Ultimate PC as quickly as possible Dan ships copies of Microsoft Windows 95, Encarta 95, Works 95, Money and Scenes. Furthermore, Dan's User's Manual describes how to get your system started and identifies the important system components, describes the

▲ A super fast PC, in a box packed with goodies — that'll be dandy.

installation of expansion cards, disk drives, and additional memory.

Altogether, Dan's Ultimate PC is a dream to use. The hardware performance is excellent, its components function together to deliver sufficient power for most current applications. I don't think anyone could expect more from a system designed as a general use, high-power workstation.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Hardware

System requirements:

Not applicable

Ease of use:

Plug it all in and go. No problems here.

Performance:

The fastest PC we've ever seen!

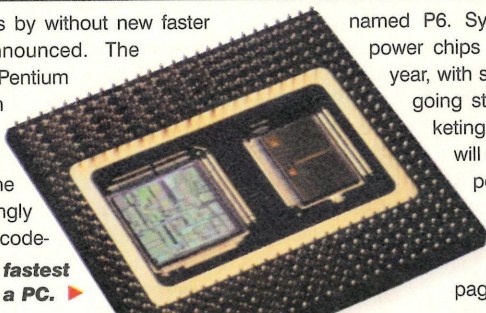
Value for money:

Superb. It's also got just about every expansion type you could want bundled inside to boot!

Pentium Power

It seems that hardly a month goes by without new faster processors and PCs being announced. The 133MHz Pentium is the fastest Intel Pentium chip currently available, although faster models are coming. The next model scheduled for release is a 150MHz variety. Then there's the next generation of Pentiums, cunningly named Pentium Pro — previously code-

The Intel Pentium Pro — the fastest processor ever seen in a PC. ▶



named P6. Systems featuring these super power chips won't appear until early next year, with speeds starting at 150mhz and going straight up. Intel's current marketing plans mean these later chips will only initially be used in the corporate server and workstation markets, although they originally said that about the Pentium! See our news pages this issue for more details.

9

The Perfect PCs for Home

Multimedia - Modem - FAX - Sound - Business, Education & Games Software

Dan introduces a brand new range of PCs specially designed for use by the whole family. All models come with great features to make them fast, powerful and very reliable, affordable and easy to use. The Home PCs create endless possibilities for everyone

in the family. The younger children can enjoy games and educational programs full of fun graphics and sounds. Older children can do homework, school projects, use an encyclopedia, listen to music or

watch TV (option at extra cost). Adults can use a range of powerful applications including a word processor, spreadsheet and database, send and receive faxes and Email or get connected to the Internet. Family life will never be the same again.



The dan Power Speakers shown in the pictures are available as an upgrade.

dan Home PC/SMM

- 8MB RAM - Fast 525MB HDD
- 486 DX2/66 CPU
- Fast Graphics card 1MB/32-bit
- 14" Super VGA L/RN/I Monitor
- 14.4BPS Fax/MODEM
- Sound Blaster 16
- 4x Speed CD-ROM
- 256KB Cache
- Fast EIDE PCI Hard Disk Controller
- Free Slots: 1 PCI, 1 PCI or ISA & 1 ISA
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
- Desktop Case, UK Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse, Microphone
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95 installed
- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- dan Advanced Speakers (10W)
- Microsoft Works, Money, Scenes & ENCARTA Encyclopedia

486
PROCESSOR

£42.79
per month
APR 19.9%

EASY BUY

£1100

£1310.13 inc Del & VAT



The dan Power Speakers shown in the pictures are available as an upgrade.

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- 8MB RAM - Fast 525MB HDD
- 75 or 90MHz Pentium® Processor
- Fast Graphics card 1MB/64-bit
- 14" Super VGA L/RN/I Monitor
- 14.4BPS Fax/MODEM
- Sound Blaster 16
- 4x Speed CD-ROM
- 256KB Cache
- Fast EIDE PCI Hard Disk Controller
- Free Slots: 2 PCI, 1 PCI or ISA
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
- Desktop Case, UK Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse, Microphone
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95 installed
- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- dan Advanced Speakers (10W)
- Microsoft Works, Money, Scenes & ENCARTA Encyclopedia

pentium
PROCESSOR

£48.47
per month
APR 19.9%

EASY BUY

P5-75 £1248

£1484.03 inc Del & VAT

£51.20
per month
APR 19.9%

P5-90 £1319

£1567.45 inc Del & VAT

The BEST Upgrades

- 15" Monitor Upgrade £ 86
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- 1GB FAST EIDE Hard Disk Upgrade £ 50
- Memory upgrade from 8MB to 16MB £ 216

Delivery cost to most of UK for one system is £15.

All prices exclude VAT @ 17.5%. E.&O.E.

Ask for the BEST Software Upgrade



EASY BUY

Personal FINANCE

A monthly payment scheme is available to private purchasers, subject to status & proof of identity. A typical example of a payment calculation for a dan computer costing £914 ex VAT would be: £914 + £15 (delivery) + 17.5% VAT = £1,091.58 total cash price, payable by 10% deposit of £109.16 followed by 36 monthly direct debit payments of £35.65 (19.9% APR). Written quotations available on request. Dan technology plc is a licensed credit broker.

Watch TV & TELETEXT on your PC & capture video add £167

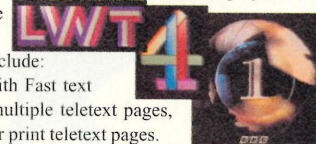
This card combines TV program viewing with video recording on your PC. It enables the PC to receive TV broadcast signals directly from an aerial or cable and display a live TV program on your standard VGA monitor. You can even connect it to a VCR, laser disk player or camcorder. With all these inputs you can then create AVI (additional software required) movies to play back on other Personal Computers. Additional TV features include: Full screen TV, 8x zoom and channel preview.

TV on your PC & Teletext

In addition to the TV capability you can display teletext pages in separate windows.

The functions include:

- Teletext with Fast text
- View multiple teletext pages, save or print teletext pages.
- DDE links can be created between the teletext pages allowing viewing in any Windows program supporting DDE (eg. Microsoft Excel and Word)



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Dan received over forty awards in 1993 and 1994, including PC Magazine's Overall Satisfaction with Service and Reliability Award for three years running.

New awards are still coming in 1995.





dantum Value/s

Entry Level Pentium® Processor System

75-133MHz Pentium® Processor
8MB RAM - 525MB HDD
1MB DRAM 32-bit Video Card
14" FST Low Radiation N/I Monitor

- 256KB Cache Memory
- Free Slots: 2 PCI, 1 PCI or ISA & 2 ISA
- Fast EIDE PCI Hard Disk Controller
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- Desktop Case w/200W PSU
- 102 Key UK Keyboard
- New Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95
- Microsoft Works for Windows

75MHz	£ 1024
90MHz	£ 1098
100MHz	£ 1141
120MHz	£ 1193
133MHz	£ 1324

1GB EIDE HDD Upgrade Add £ 50




dantum/s

The Classic Pentium® Processor System

75-133MHz Pentium® Processor
8MB RAM - 850MB HDD
1MB DRAM 64-bit Video Card
15" FST Low Radiation N/I Monitor

- Triton Chipset w/256KB Cache Memory
- Free Slots: 2 PCI, 1 PCI or ISA & 2 ISA
- Fast EIDE PCI Hard Disk Controller
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- Desktop Case w/200W PSU
- 102 Key UK Keyboard
- New Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95
- Microsoft Works for Windows

75MHz	£ 1160
90MHz	£ 1234
100MHz	£ 1277
120MHz	£ 1329
133MHz	£ 1460

1GB EIDE HDD Upgrade Add £ 27




dantum 95/s

High Power Pentium® Processor System

75-133MHz Pentium® Processor
16MB EDORAM - 850MB HDD
2MB DRAM 64-bit Video Card
15" FST Low Radiation N/I Monitor

- Triton Chipset w/256KB Cache Memory
- Free Slots: 2 PCI, 1 PCI or ISA & 2 ISA
- Fast PCI EIDE Hard Disk Controller
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- Desktop Case w/200W PSU
- 102 Key UK Keyboard
- New Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95
- Microsoft Works for Windows

75MHz	£ 1420
90MHz	£ 1494
100MHz	£ 1537
120MHz	£ 1589
133MHz	£ 1720

2MB VRAM Video Card Upgrade Add £ 73
1GB EIDE HDD Upgrade Add £ 27

Other Configurations

Based on the above specification with 14" SVGA Monitor and your choice of Hard Disk Drive & PENTIUM Processor

Pentium Processor	75	90	100	120
420MB	£1051	£1127	£1172	£1227
850MB	£1090	£1166	£1211	£1266
1GB	£1117	£1193	£1238	£1293
1.6GB	£1237	£1313	£1358	£1413
1.04GB	£1472	£1548	£1593	£1648
2.10GB	£1746	£1822	£1867	£1922

Pentium Processor	75	90	100	120
525MB	£1095	£1171	£1216	£1271
850MB	£1119	£1195	£1240	£1295
1GB	£1146	£1222	£1267	£1322
1.6GB	£1266	£1342	£1387	£1442
1.04GB	£1501	£1577	£1622	£1677
2.10GB	£1775	£1851	£1896	£1951

Pentium Processor	75	90	100	120
525MB	£1366	£1442	£1487	£1542
850MB	£1390	£1466	£1511	£1566
1GB	£1417	£1493	£1538	£1593
1.6GB	£1537	£1613	£1658	£1713
1.04GB	£1772	£1848	£1893	£1948
2.10GB	£2046	£2122	£2167	£2222

All SCSI models use the Adaptec AHA-2940 Controller that uses an extra PCI Slot. 4 GB & 9GB SCSI Hard Disk drives are available

133MHz upgrade from 120MHz add £ 135

dan internal Fax/Modems 14.4BPS £69 28.8BPS £154

Microsoft
Office 95
Upgrade
£ 169

dan Multimedia

Choice of Software Bundle (OEM Packages with On-Line Help)

Microsoft Multimedia Bundle (on 2 CDs & Disks)

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Lotus 1-2-3, Ami Pro, Organizer, Approach, Smart Pics, Seecam

Games: FIFA International Football, Mega Race, Theme Park & Dragon Lore

Sage 'Moneywise', Grolier Encyclopedia plus exciting Training Programs



dan desktop with Multimedia & Power Speakers Option

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Special Configurations at Special Offer Prices

The configurations of dan /s systems are not variable.



Triton



dan Ultimate PC

The PC you always dreamed of

Intel Triton Chipset
Pentium® Processor
16MB EDO RAM - 1GB EIDE HDD
2MB VRAM 64-bit Video Card
17" Monitor Trinitron LR Monitor
4x CD-ROM
SoundBlaster AWE 32 Value 512K
dan FAX/Modem

- Triton Chipset w/256KB Cache Memory
- Free Slots: 2 PCI
- Fast PCI EIDE Hard Disk Controller
- Hi-Fi Power dan Speakers (80W PMPO)
- dan Internal 14.4BPS Fax/Modem
- 1.44MB Floppy disk Drive
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- 1 Parallel & 2 Fast Serial Ports
- 102 Key UK Keyboard
- New Microsoft Mouse
- Windows 3.11 & MS DOS 6.22 or Windows 95
- Software titles:
 - MS Encarta '95 Encyclopedia,
 - MS Works for Windows
 - MS Money for Windows
 - MS Scenes



Pentium

100MHz	£2298
120MHz	£2350
133MHz	£2481

Pipeline Burst Cache Memory Upgrade £48
1.6GB EIDE HDD Upgrade Add £114

Windows® 95
Ready to Run



from
£1024
£1220.83 inc Del & VAT

£39.88
per month
APR 19.9%
EASY Buy



dan Midi Tower Case Option

Upgrade Kits



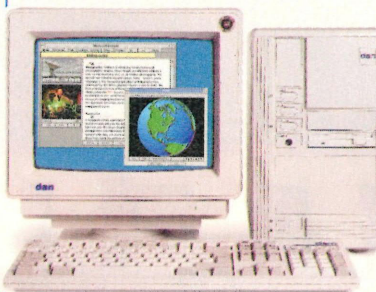
Dan Multimedia Kit 2

4x Speed CD-ROM
SoundBlaster 16
Advanced Speakers 10W PMPO
Microphone
with Lotus Bundle
with Microsoft Bundle
£235
£203

6xSpeed IDE CD-ROM upgrade from 4xSpeed add £102

Dan Multimedia Kit 3

4x Speed CD-ROM
SoundBlaster AWE 32 Value 512K
Hi-Fi Power Speakers 80W PMPO
Microphone
with Lotus Bundle
with Microsoft Bundle
£308
£276



dan Mini Tower Case Option



dan Ultimate PC RECOMMENDED

"Recognising the value of a fully-configured system designed with the power user in mind, we can recommend the dan ultimate PC (£3,338). As well as a 100MHz Pentium and 1GB hard disk, you also get a quad-speed CD-ROM, SoundBlaster AWE32, network interface card, data/fax modem & DAT drive. This excellent mix of components earned it the highest feature score in this review, and should largely remove the need for disruptive upgrades." *PC Magazine (dan Ultimate 100), June '95*

Delivery cost to most of UK for one system is £15. E.&O.E. All prices exclude VAT @ 17.5%.

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Printer guru Charles Hathaway meditates with an inkjet and finds the answer to his quest. An inkjet better than a laser printer.

Deskjet 600

Deskjets are becoming obsolete before you even get them out of the box these days — it's only a few issues since I reviewed the Deskjet 540 and now here's the Deskjet 600.

The latest Deskjet 600 is outwardly identical to the 540, but lift the lid and you'll see a substantial number of changes. For a start the 600 has redesigned print heads and

Price: £340 (RRP inc VAT)

Manufacturer: Hewlett Packard

Contact: (01344) 369 222

cartridges that now offer 600 by 600 dpi print resolution in monochrome and up to 300 by 600 dpi in colour on special glossy paper (300 by 300 dpi on normal or coated paper). Print speed has increased too and more paper sizes and different media are supported, including custom sizes from A5 up to A4, transparencies, card stock and adhesive labels.

Note that the old Deskjet cartridges won't work with the new 600 model — you have to have the new style ink cartridges.

◀ **The Deskjet 600 — amazing print quality for an inkjet.**

Oddly enough, close examination shows no visible difference, but I can vouch for the fact that the older cartridges simply won't fit.

When compared to the 540, and earlier colour models such as the 550C and 560C, the colour ink output from the 600 is much brighter and deeper and the text output is phenomenal. I had a hard time telling 540 output from that of a low end laser. With the 600 it's easy to tell the difference — the Deskjet's is better!

The 600 comes complete with its own custom printer driver for Windows and a number of TrueType fonts on disk. It is plug and play compatible with Windows 95 but, at the time of writing, no optimised Windows 95 drivers exist, though a free upgrade will soon be available. With street prices getting down to around £250, the 600 is likely to be a real knockout.



▲ **The test print file (top) and the final result when printed (above).**

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Printer

System requirements:

Any PC with a parallel port

Value for money:

**Bargain base-
ment price,
professional
quality results.**

8



VoiceMail

If you've got a multimedia PC and want something new to do with it, VoiceMail could be for you. Without needing a modem it allows you to have answerphone, voice mail, mailboxes and speakerphone capabilities at your home or office.

It works on a simple concept. Your sound card can play and record digital sound, why not then use it to record incoming telephone calls and playback messages? Why not indeed, and this is what VoiceMail does.

Just connect the VoiceMail unit to the back of your PC, plug in your phone line and speakers and you're ready for action.

Price: £49.99

Manufacturer: Silica

Contact: (0181) 309 1111

Once set up you can control your phone from Windows and have a miniature computerised telecommunications centre on your desktop! And for a few calls it's great — until the practical limitations dawn on you.

For starters recording messages on your hard drive swallows storage space at an alarming rate. Secondly although it operates in Windows and

Andy Leaning turns his PC into the centre of an electronic communications system, without using a modem.

is easy to use by PC standards, it still can't compete with the simplicity of a single button answer phone. When you get back after you've been out you hardly want to sit down at a PC clicking on buttons and opening Windows just to find out your mothers called — again!

Then there's the concern that you'll also need to leave the PC on all the time, something many people will feel unhappy about, let alone the electricity cost.

But if you do leave your PC on regularly, use Windows and want to add relatively inexpensive telecomms facilities to your desktop, it could be ideal.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Communications

System requirements:

Windows PC with sound card.

Value for money:

**Great if you use
your PC often,
but normal
phone equip-
ment is better.**

7

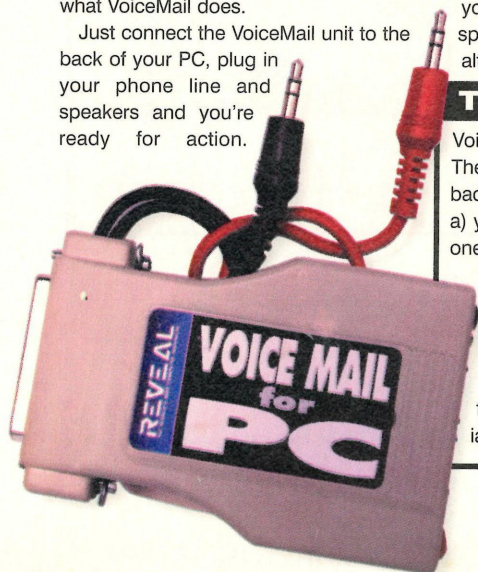
That's a Short One

VoiceMail is a great concept, but has several design failings. The first problem is that it needs its own serial port on the back of the PC. No problem here until you realise that either a) you haven't got a secondary serial port, b) you have got one, but you're using it for your mouse connection, or c) your spare serial interface, is a 25-pin affair so the supplied 9-pin cable provided won't fit it. This means you'll either have to buy a second serial port or a new cable to fit the 25-pin connector on the spare port you do have.

Another oversight is that the cables supplied are far too short. As mentioned the unit itself plugs into your serial port, but you'll also need to take a further lead and plug

it into the speakers. However, you may find, as I did, that because the serial cable ties the unit so close to the rear of the system, the remaining cables aren't long enough to stretch to your speakers. You can get round this of course, by moving the speakers closer to the back of the PC, but this is untidy. And if you have a floor standing system, there is no way at all the leads will reach from the system to the top of the desk where the speakers are. As the leads are wired into the unit they can't be replaced, the only choice is to buy phono-extension cables.

These problems however only occur once, and when solved you won't have many other difficulties.



Give your PC the best Christmas

NEW

Here at Golden Image, we have the new range of Joysticks and Rodents.
With more features for less. Good value for money!

Alfa Commander Alfa Commander Pro



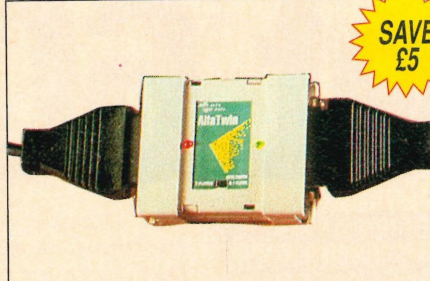
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Thrustmaster Compatible Joystick, 4 Fire Buttons, Throttle & Rudder control, turbo fire & coolie hat.
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Adding Keyboard Emulation to the Alfa Commander to Produce an unbeatable combination.

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New style of 4 button joystick. The Worlds first, Left & Right handed Joystick.

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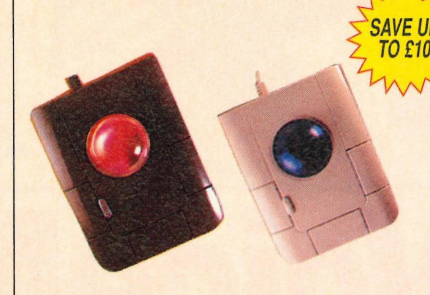


SAVE £5

2-3 Button Optical Mouse. With no moving parts.

"Previously only Workstations used optical mice, Now buy a workstation quality mouse for your PC". AlfaOptic is a wise choice" – Computer Buyer

Alfa Crystal Alfa Track



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"Excellent All Rounder"

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"Its so darn cheap we felt compelled to buy two" PC Attack

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2-3 Button Mouse, with build in palm rest. High resolution 350-3500 dpi.

"A decent mouse for the price" PCF

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This is the Windows 95 specific release of the popular MS Works—a collection of everyday business-type applications tailored to home or small business use. It includes a word processor, a database, a spreadsheet, plus drawing, clipart and even a comms option.

The default option on loading is to get help from Works' TaskWizards. These make almost anything easier, asking you questions and then performing tasks based on your answers. Even if you only want to start a new document it'll create the layout, leaving you to fill in the blanks.

There are also plenty of gadgets which make life even easier. The word processor module features EasyText, a sort of computer equivalent of shorthand. You simply type in a shortened version of your text which the program

MS Works 95

Sue James finds the latest version of MS Works for Windows 95 is a magic collection of common tools, even without the wizards!

Price: £68.08

Manufacturer: Microsoft

Contact: 01734 270001

EasyCalc makes spreadsheet formulae much easier to work out and understand. ▶

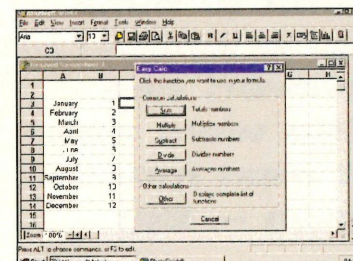
then expands to its longer form.

Taking into account that new spreadsheet users often find it difficult to figure out how to input long calculations, Microsoft has also incorporated EasyCalc into its spreadsheet. This handy little gadget takes a lot of the brain work out of the equations, making the whole program much easier to use—not to mention speeding things up a hell of a lot. Seasoned spreadsheet users will also welcome the fact that Excel's Autofill facility of dragging on the corner of a cell or a range to extend a series has

▶ Works 95 has the familiar drawing tools

now migrated to Works. Along with the basic tools there's also charting and drawing utilities, along with collections of clipart. The result of all this is that you rarely need to leave Works for another program. There's even a simple communications facility that builds on the comms facilities of Windows 95, adding transfer capabilities amongst other things.

In the past Works has suffered through lacking features and power for long term or serious use. This isn't the case with this version. Along with its minimal hard drive requirements (20Mb tops, 5Mb minimum), Works proves itself to be a versatile, low-cost program. It's perfect for anyone who wants this kind of package, but doesn't want to fork out for something as hefty and expensive as Microsoft Office 95.



PCR VERDICT

Category:

Application Suite

System requirements:

Any PC running Windows 95

Value for money:

Excellent. It may be cheap, but it's packed with features.

8

French Vocabulary Builder

After rubbing himself down with a clove of garlic and smoking a packet of Gitanes, Pat Fox felt ready for a French lesson...

Ever tried one of those tapes that is supposed to teach you French in 15 minutes flat by making you repeat pointless phrases like "Le veloplanchiste a vole mes pantalons" (The windsurfer just stole my trousers) over and over? Well, the multimedia revolution has brought us the next step forward in language learning technology—the interactive teaching experience.

French Vocabulary Builder aims to improve your knowledge of French by teaching you new vocabulary by topic, and then testing it using Speech Recognition techniques. There are several ways to learn: most simply involve seeing a picture of a given object or activity, then hearing the word spoken in French and then English. There are also some simple word games intended to help reinforce your grasp of the new words. But the program's main selling point and its biggest failure, is its supposed ability to respond to your own spoken responses (through a suitable microphone/soundcard arrangement)

Price: £52.81

Manufacturer: HyperGlott

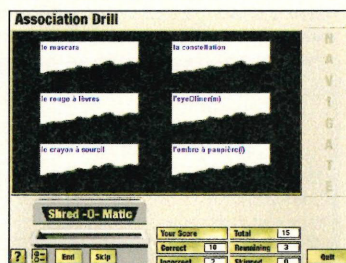
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and spot any errors.

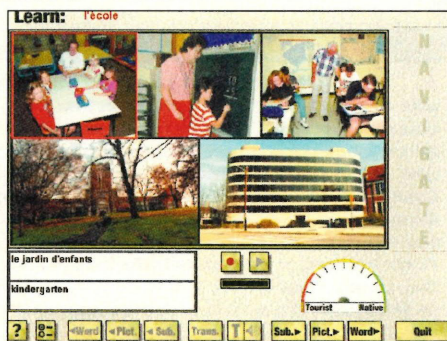
This is a great idea in theory, but the problem lies with the nature of Speech Recognition technology itself—it just doesn't work very reliably. Being a graduate in French, I was more than a little annoyed to find myself being marked down for mistakes that I had not made, and I was disappointed to note that it did not spot other errors that I did make.

Despite that, this is not a really a bad product in itself—if you ignore the speech recognition facility, it is a fairly useful study aid for those casual students who want to expand their knowledge of everyday French.

At the kindergarten—which is how I feel with this program. ▶



▶ With the Association drill, you must spot the odd one out. But don't put your fingers in the Shred-O-Matic.



▶ Looks like a charming French family scene, but they're about to cook the dog in garlic and eat it in a bun.

PCR VERDICT

Category:

Language teaching

System requirements:

486DX33, 4Mb, Windows 3.1, Sound Blaster comp card and microphone

Value for money:

Useful for vocab learning, but forget the speech recognition.

6

Writing these intros is hard. Luckily Andy Leaning uses Ascend to plan his life so he's got time to think up a witty, clever, one. (So we'll see it next month then — Ed).

By now you should have a pretty good idea of just how our September cover disc utility, Ascend 4, can help you organise your time. Over the last few months we've shown you all of the individual modules that make up the program, such as the task manager, appointment scheduler, daily journal and calendar and how to master them.

part 3 So now it's time to look at ways in which all these different modules can be linked together. Meaning you'll be able to organise your time even more effectively from now on. This month we show you how you can use Ascend's Address and Phone book module as a central control for other parts of the program.

Using this module you can schedule future appointments in the calendar, check for double bookings as you do so, record details of phone calls and even set up tasks, all from within this one feature.

Then later you can look at the appointment details or the task list and with a single click bring up the notes you made during the phone call. This capability makes it nearly impossible to forget about meetings arranged on the phone or lose notes made earlier that you need for the appointment.

Going, going, gone...

This tutorial covers Ascend version 4, which was given away with our September '95 issue. If you missed it there's still a chance to get it from our Back Issues department. But due to the popularity of the issue stocks are running low, so order your copy soon. For prices and ordering details call our Back Issues department on (01848) 468888.

Alternatively you can telephone Softwerk on (01462) 832 244 for details on how to upgrade to the latest version of Ascend 5.

Ascend 4

▲ Double click on a name in the address book as normal to look up the contact details — such as the telephone number. This is the full display of names and addresses in the book. You can change the type of view and the address format (ZIP code to Postcode, State to County for example) from the Preferences/Telephone and Address menu. It's also worth noting that under the address fields (above right in this window) are two buttons — 1st and 2nd address — these allow you to enter two addresses per contact (a home and work location perhaps). Getting back to the tutorial, at the bottom of the window are two buttons. History shows a record of all previous phone calls made to and from the contact. The Call Log button takes you to the Contact Manager window from where it's possible to ...

▲ ... record details of outgoing and incoming calls with this person. Click on the Direction button to enter the details. This information can be shown in future by clicking on the History option in this window or the same button in the previous window. Calls are displayed in date and time sequence. Along with the call times and notes made during the call the duration, which is controlled with the Call Timer buttons, is also shown. To time a conversation simply click on the Start and Stop buttons. Click on the Follow Up button to for the next step ...

▲ ... and schedule appointments or add new jobs to the task list. The appointment scheduler will prevent you from double booking an appointment. To add a new task click on the Task button, you can then assign a priority to the job being added. The Link button will add a Note flag to the appointment or task. When you open either the calendar or task list and click on the notes the program will automatically open the Call History log for you showing the details of the call that generated the appointment or task!

Next month will be the final Ascend tutorial, so don't miss it.

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Fed up with reviewing the fastest, biggest and best in PC hardware Andy Leaning takes time out to bring you this month's SMARTBook tutorial on creating new commands.

SMARTBook

part 2

We've seen SmartBombs, SmartCards and even SmartBatteries — now it's the turn of the book. With our October 1995 cover disc utility we gave you a program that would enable you to produce your own interactive book, complete with pictures, simple animations, text and hot buttons. And over the last two months, in both our cover disc pages and on our tutorial pages we've provided you with step-by-step guides to creating your own book or presentation. Each month we have clearly illustrated how using simple on-screen buttons, words, graphics and sound you can create your own interactive multimedia book or presentation.

The buttons we've looked at so far are one-command affairs, using the predefined list of SMARTBook instructions — such as playing a sound, moving to a new page or leaving the program. But it's possible to do far more. From just one button you can play a tune, run a quick animation and then load another program — as this tutorial shows you.

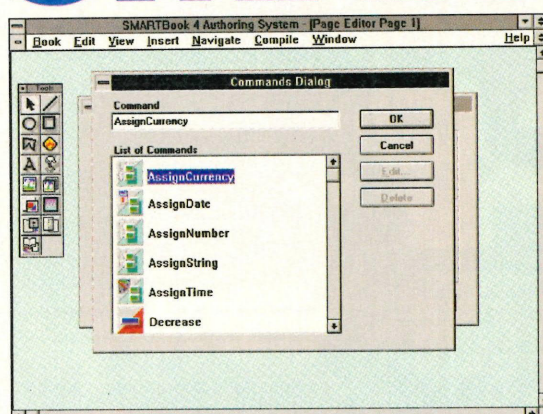
Brucey Bonus

As a bonus the SMARTBook production created in this very tutorial can also be found on this month's cover CD. This is the first part of an on-going tutorial that we'll be building up over several months. The final production will be a new user interface to make using your PC easier — whilst also showing off the power and versatility of SMARTBook. This month it shows several buttons all featuring two or more commands. Next month we'll improve upon this production still further, see you then.

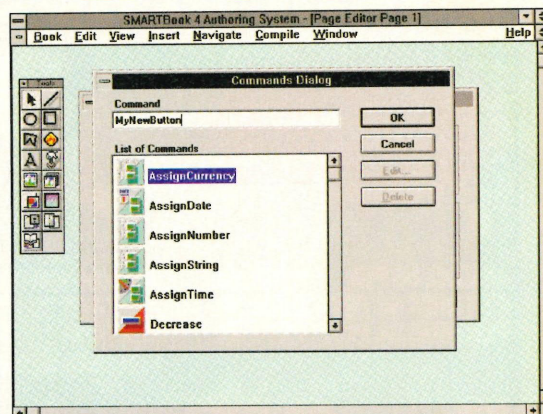
Get smart, get SMARTBook

This lovingly crafted tutorial covers the multimedia authoring program SMARTBook 4, which was given away with the October 1995 issue of PC Review. This utility, worth £116, allows you to combine photos, words, and pictures on screen to create interactive presentations, computerised books and magazines. If you missed the October issue don't worry, you can still order it from our Back Issues department. Call them on (01858) 468888.

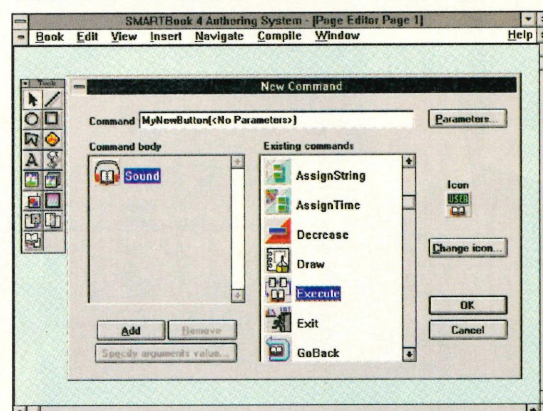
If you like SMARTBook we recommend you upgrade to the latest version of SMARTBook. The latest version features more macro commands, fast saving, support for AVI files and backgrounds. To order your copy call Frax Software on: 01342 314557



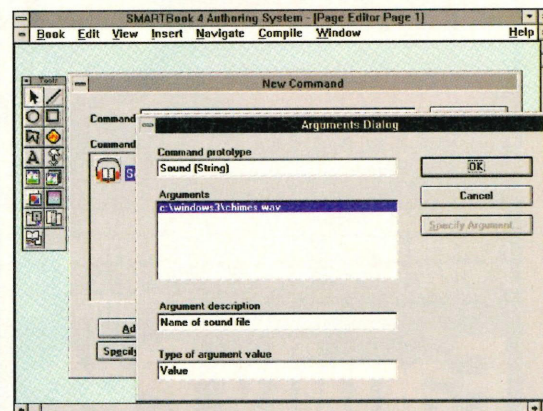
1 Start a new book. Double click on a page and place a button on it. Click on the button, and in the window that opens click on the Define Command option. There's no option for creating a new command in the window but here's how to do it.



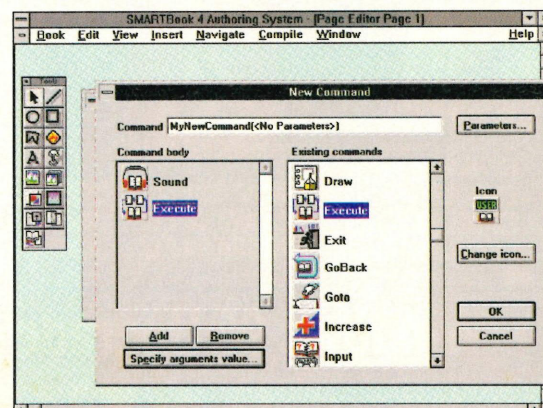
2 Highlight the current command name and delete it. Now type in a new name. This will be your new command name, so try to think of something that matches the command action. Once you've done that click on OK. SMARTBook brings up the next window.



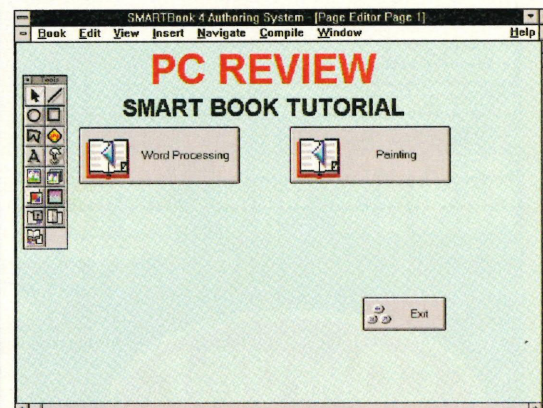
3 You will see a list of the existing commands. Use these to create the new command by simply selecting the commands you want from the list on the right-hand side and dragging them over to the left-hand list. You can use two or more commands.



4 If the command dragged over has parameters, then a button at the bottom will become enabled to let you fill in the variables. Do this for each command dragged over. To change the order of the instructions drag them around in the left-hand list.



5 The buttons found in the example file, on the CD, use the commands Sound and Execute. For the sound file the parameter is c:\windows\chimes.wav while the execute parameter is the path and filename of the program you want to load. You'll need to change this to Programs on your system.



6 As a final touch we added an animation to the buttons. When these buttons are clicked on, the animation within them will play, the Chimes sound file is heard and a program is loaded — in this case either MS Word or MS Paint. The third button plays an animation, a sound, then exits the program.



COMPUTERS

Issue 2.0

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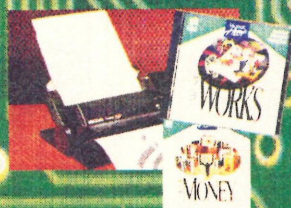
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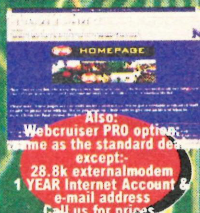
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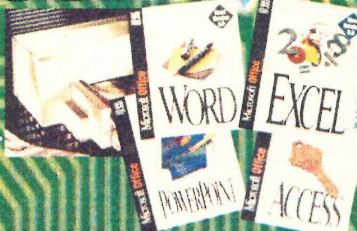
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Q & A

In celebration of our 50th issue of PC Review, Mike James answers 50 of your most commonly asked PC questions.

50th ISSUE SPECIAL

50 BEST Q&A'S

HEADINGS

You may be just browsing or perhaps looking for a specific solution. Either way the questions and answers are now broken down into subject types to help you find the ones you want.



VIDEO

Anything relating to video and graphics hardware.



SOUND

For all those audio-related conundrums.



HARDWARE

Motherboards, hard drives, BIOS and general hardware.



COMMS

For all your Internet and modem questions.



MS-DOS

It's messy and a novice's nightmare. Help is at hand.



WINDOWS

General Windows enquiries.



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For those enquiries about your applications and software utilities.



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MEMORY

1. More memory

I am trying to run Wing Commander II on my PC, but it keeps complaining that I don't have enough memory. I have deleted as much as I can from my disk drive and there's lots of space. So what is it asking for?

This is a common, but easily remedied confusion. Disk space and memory are two different things. Memory or RAM is provided by chips inside your machine and is what programs use when they are active, ie running. Disk space is where your programs live when they are inactive and waiting for you to run them. What WCII is asking for is more RAM and not disk space.

2. Wrong type of memory

My machine has 4Mb of RAM and yet DOS applications are always telling me that I am running out of "expanded" memory. Surely 4Mb of memory is "expanded" enough?

There are three types of memory — conventional, expanded and extended — and your 4Mb is divided up into these types. The first 640Kb is conventional memory and this is essential for the running of DOS applications. The rest, assuming you have at least a 386, can be configured either as expanded or extended memory. In a standard system extended memory is created by a program called HIMEM.SYS and expanded memory by EMM386 — you should find this in your machine's Config.sys file. You can change the amount of expanded memory by adding a value (in Kb) to the end of the EMM386 line.

3. Clean boot?

A game I am trying to install tells me to use a "clean boot" disk. What is this?

When your machine starts up it loads lots of drivers and extras to make it work just how you like it. A clean boot disk is one that gets your machine started without all this clutter — so freeing as much conventional memory as possible. You can make a clean boot disk using the command FORMAT A: /S. The /S makes the disk bootable.

4. Optimised startup files

How can I make sure that I am getting as much conventional memory as possible from my PC?

In practice a clean boot disk may not give you the largest amount of conventional memory possible and you may have to create optimised autoexec.bat and config.sys files. In practice this is very difficult unless you know a lot about DOS. The best solution is to use a memory optimiser like MemMaker — included with MS-DOS 5 and later. This should be able to optimise your startup files but it often doesn't work very well, so keep backup copies of the originals.

5. Parity error

My machine sometimes stops with the message "Parity error". Can you please tell me just what does this mean?

Your machine has a memory fault. Parity checks that data stored in memory hasn't changed of its own accord. A parity error means it has and you need to have at least one memory chip changed — it's a trip to the repair shop sadly!



PROCESSOR

6. Intel Inside

I keep seeing "Intel Inside" in advertisements for machines. What is an "Intel" and do I need one?

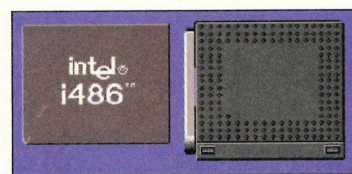
Intel is the company that invented the processor that makes your PC go. There are other companies who make "compatible" processors and to make sure that you knew its name Intel started an advertising campaign to tell you that only genuine Intel chips were being used. In practice you don't really need to worry too much about the processor in your machine being made by Intel.

7. OverDrive

My machine was sold to me on the grounds it had an "OverDrive" socket. What is this and can I use it to upgrade?

The OverDrive socket was included to allow you to plug in a specially made processor that would speed up your machine without you having to remove the existing chip. Yes, you can use the

OverDrive socket to speed up your machine, but you have to discover what sort of OverDrive chip it will take — a DX4 or a Pentium.



▲ Has your machine got an OverDrive socket.

8. No OverDrive

My machine doesn't have an OverDrive socket. Can I still upgrade it?

In principle yes — but you will have to remove the existing processor from its socket.

9. How much faster

If I replace the existing processor chip how much faster can I make my machine go?

Upgrading a 486DX to a DX2 doubles the speed and upgrading to a DX4 triples it. If you can change the clock speed on the motherboard then you can get bigger gains but this is a rather more complicated operation.

10. 386 upgrade

It seems OverDrives are only for 486 machines. What can I do if I have a 386?

Intel only support OverDrives for 486 processors, but other manufacturers — notably Cyrix — sell replacement processors for the 386 which also run as fast as a 486.

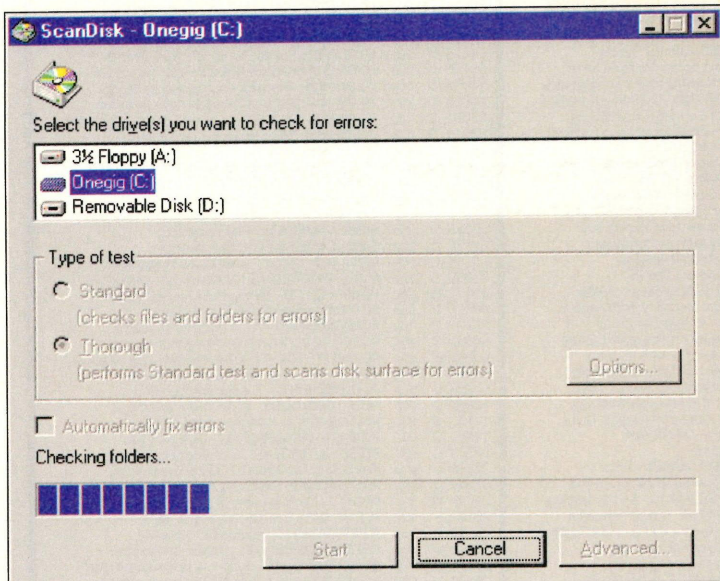


DISKS

11. Disk check

What can I do to make sure that my hard disk is healthy?

There are a number of disk checking programs on the market but Chkdsk and its improved version ScanDisk are standard in DOS. You should run one of these programs every time you start your machine. The reason is that some disk problems can be detected and cured before they cause a real problem.



▲ ScanDisk - Windows 95 version. A lot friendlier than the DOS version.

12. Defragging

A program's manual says that it goes faster when the disk is defragmented. What does this mean and how do I do it?

As you use a disk, the free space on it becomes scattered into small blocks, ie. it becomes fragmented. Defragmenting reorganises the storage to bring all of the free space together. If you have MS-DOS 6 or later you can use its built in defragmenter called defrag. If not you will have to buy a set of disk utilities that includes a defragger.

13. Cache

I have been told that a "cache" will make my disk work faster. Is this true and how do I get one?

A cache is an area of memory used to store data that is being read or written to disk and it does speed up disk access. There are two ways to implement a cache — software and hardware. A software cache makes use of your existing RAM and this makes it cheap — SmartDrive, a software disk cache is free with MS-DOS and Windows — but you may find yourself short of RAM. Fitting a hardware cache involves buying a new disk controller and this is expensive.

14. Compression

Can I really increase the size of my disk drive using compression?

No! What happens is that the data is made smaller by finding more efficient ways of packing it. The main cost is that compression slows down disk access because of the need to compress and decompress data. Compression also stops some programs from working at all. If you can avoid it — do. One possible use is to compress part of a drive and use it for storage of backup files. If you only play Doom occasionally for instance you could store it there.

15. Unerase

I have deleted a file — can I get it back? Yes, but only if you "unerase" it immediately after erasing it. The unerase command is in MS-DOS 5 and later. Or you can buy a set of disk utilities. DOS doesn't overwrite a file that you erase until it needs the space — until then there is a chance at least to get it back.



VIDEO

16. Video memory

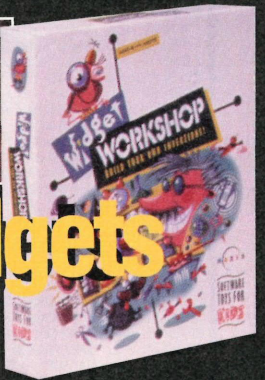
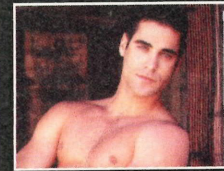
My video card can be fitted with extra memory. Is this worth doing?

The answer depends on the type of video card and how much memory is already installed. The extra memory is needed for additional video modes — higher resolution or more colours. You need to look at the video card's specification and see what extra modes the memory provides — and make sure your monitor can be used at a higher resolution. Some video cards do work a little faster if you add more memory but this is the exception rather than the rule.

17. VESA drivers

Games often say they need a VESA standard video card or driver — what does this mean?

VESA (Video Electronic Standards Association) is a standard way of using a video card — it irons out the differences so that the software you've bought can be used with any hardware. Some cards come with a VESA driver built in and in this case you don't have to do anything. Otherwise you have to find and load a suitable VESA driver before you run the program. Usually a library of VESA drivers is included with the program and your only problem is in selecting the right one. If you can't locate one try contacting the manufacturers of the video card. It's also well worth checking with them occasionally for updated drivers.



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24397	D	10p	AM I BIOS INFORMATION - Nice tutorial
09848	D	50p	AM I SETUP v2.7 - Complete setup control
12083	W	20p	ANIMOUSE v5.0 - Amazing animated cursors
34040	D	10p	ANIMATE - Brill 4K winner at ASM95
34717	W	50p	ARASAN CHESS - A strong player
04453	D	70p	AS-EASY-AS v5.5F - Lotus spreadsheet clone
16254	D	70p	ASTROFIRE v1.0 - Stunning graphics blaster
33304	W	240p	ASTRO ANALYSIS v1.2 - Analyse birth charts
33045	D	40p	ATOMANIA - Good logic board game
08457	D	60p	AVARICUS v1.6 - Graphic adventure in Pompei
19286	W	40p	BACKTOSIX WIZARD v2 - Windows cleaner
20835	D	50p	BARSOFF FORTUNE TELLER - Clinical sc. saver
23586	D	10p	BBSING FOR BEGINNERS - Easy reading
21361	W	60p	BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD - Four outrageous WAV files
21528	W	30p	BELCH WAVES - Twelve good specimens
33062	D	30p	BELIEVE - Valhalla demo with optional GUS
24064	W	130p	BESTBOOKS - Small business accounts
32207	D	40p	BESTLIBRARY++ - Good freeware C++ lib
09964	D	40p	BIBLE COMPANION v5.01 - Bible study aid
23738	D	20p	BIO-LOTTO - Pick numbers using biorhythms
24338	W	30p	BIO RECYCLER v1.2 - Computer joke program
33307	D	70p	BLUEBOOK v1.02 - Versatile personal database
08464	D	10p	BLUTZ v5.4 - Powerful draughts player
08467	D	40p	BOLO ADVENTURES v1.3.0 - 40 of them
23443	D	40p	BOOKBANK II v2.01 - Book collectors database
05393	D	50p	BOOKS OF BUDDA - The Gospel and the Word
04583	D	50p	BOOT.SYS v2.10 - Easy multiconfiguration utility
34041	W	50p	BOTS VERSUS BLOBS - Fun arcade game
33058	W	20p	BOW AND ARROW v1.0 - Fun for children
24420	W	10p	BRAINBUBES v1.0 - Memory training program
02792	D	60p	BREEZE v5.4 - Really good word processors
15702	W	60p	BRIDGE ASSISTANT v2.2 - Clever Bridge tutor
28610	D	70p	BUILD YER OWN v3.2 - Computer DIY manual
23072	W	30p	BULLDOZER - Screen saver digs up screen
04962	D	50p	BY THE NUMBERS v5.4 - Learn numerology
32210	D	30p	C-SCOPE v1.20 - Multi file C program analysis
05386	D	40p	C++ TUTOR v2.6 - 20 lessons with code
22084	D	230p	CALIFORNIA GIRLS - 8 XX Southern beauties
20838	D	10p	CAMILLAGATE TAPES - Full transcript
25326	D	30p	CANDY'S CONFESSIONS - 12 Amazing adventures
08488	D	40p	CAPTAIN COMIC v5.0 - Classic graphic adventure
08917	W	90p	CARDSHARK HEARTS v4.38 - Classic card game
26046	D	30p	CARLY SIMON - Complete nude shot
19749	D	60p	CATNAP - Must have classic animation
32204	D	120p	CATPIX - 100 PCX B & W feline images
24403	D	40p	CELLULAR MODIFICATION MANUAL - Phreakin
23425	D	40p	CH'AN TAO CHIA - Essays & Lectures
24452	D	40p	CHAMP MS. PACMAN LITE v1.1 - THE Pacman
02793	W	40p	CHARTIST v1.5A - Very attractive chart maker
18390	D	60p	CHEETAH v4.0 - 100s of cheats hints & tips
33081	W	80p	CHEMPAL PLUS v1.5 - Good for chemistry beginners
32194	D	20p	CHOMPER - Nice freeware Pacman clone
91170	D	100p	CHRONOLOG v1.2 - Super powerful PIM
20805	D	20p	CINDY CRAWFORD - Revealing snapshot
08686	D	40p	CIRCUMSPACE v1.0 - Space travel simulator
05550	D	50p	COLORING BOOK v2.2 - Toddlers picture fun
17841	W	60p	COMET BUSTERS v1.1 - High speed arcade action
11493	D	50p	COMPUSHOW 2000 v2.04A - Easy picture viewer
27085	W	50p	COMPUTER DICTIONARY v1.40 - 1000 item help file
11831	D	200p	COOPER GRAPHICS - 1800 Clipart PCxs
23633	W	170p	CRYSTAL WALLS v1.0 - Animated Wallpaper
28618	D	40p	CYBERBOX ADVENTURES - Superb logic puzzle
33078	D	20p	DL v2.0 - Doom & Heretic launcher
17777	D	40p	DANDYLINES - 1000 good philosophical quotes
04553	D	40p	DAZZLE v5.18 - Award winning graphic display
23771	D	50p	DC CHALLENGE v2.0 - Electronics tutorial
20444	D	50p	DEHACKED v2.2 - Doom EXE editor
02803	D	60p	DESERT FROG v4.0 - Classic screen saver
28637	D	50p	DIGITAL CHALLENGE v2.00 - Electronics tutorial
16061	D	230p	DIGITAL DREAM GIRLS - Six glamour Pics
25689	W	50p	DMAUD FOR WINDOWS v1.1 - Doom Audio editor
19220	W	20p	DODGER - Super Windows PacMan Clone
33145	D	40p	DOOM & DOOM 2 - Undetectable Deathmatch cheat
16205	D	30p	DOOM CHEAT v2.A - Walk through walls etc
32213	D	140p	DOOMCAD v6.0 - Super Doom 1 & 2, and Heretic editor
33097	D	40p	DR. SICKOFF'S JOKES - 1000 awful ones
02806	W	80p	DRAG AND ZIP v5.3 - Elegant archive manager
34054	D	30p	DRIFT - Brilliant 64K winner at ASM95
11515	D	30p	DRILLER v3.5 - Maths drills for juniors
24393	D	30p	DR SICKOFF CLEVER JOKES - 600 awful jokes
08501	D	30p	DTQ v2.2 - Clever concentration game
16088	D	20p	DUMPPROG v2.62 - Disassemble EXE files & more
12355	D	200p	EASY BASE v9.5 - Powerful relational database
09577	D	40p	EASY DRAFT v5.0 - Easy drafting with tutorial
02807	D	50p	EASY PROJECT v4.07 - Project management
18355	D	10p	EDCON PRO v2.31 - Easy configuration files editor
13565	D	50p	EDGEFLOW v6.0 - Good flowcharter
24060	D	10p	EDICTS OF KING ASOKA - Buddhist wisdom
32234	W	80p	EDISON'S NIGHTMARE - Clever Windows animated SS
22684	D	40p	EFF'S INTERNET GUIDE - Big Dummies update
24439	D	10p	ELECTRONIC EVESDROPPER - DIY info
15749	D	40p	ELEMENTAL v2.0 - Computerised periodic table
17727	D	20p	ELLE MCPHERSON - As you would like to see her
08420	D	100p	ENVISSION PUBLISHER v2.0 - DTP for DOS
30638	D	130p	EROTIC IMAGES - 36 PCX images for DTP
02586	D	80p	ETCAI v1.25 - 31 lessons in electronics
16214	D	80p	EXCELSIOR - Ultima like classic style RPG
23706	D	50p	EXECUTIONER v3.2 - Amazing DOS Desktop
10508	D	30p	EZVIEW v5.4 - View, edit & print text, hex & ziped
26973	D	120p	FAIL - Funny & bloody driving test animation

12305	D	10p	FAROUT v4.0 - Amazing graphic display
02455	D	40p	FASTFILE v5.45 - Fast, small and easy database
19576	D	10p	FAT & BOOTSAVE v2.3 - Vital safety program
04559	D	90p	F-PROT v2.19 - Easy to use antivirus program
20820	D	30p	FEMALE BODY BUILDER - Shirley Beattie
25637	D	30p	FIDDLERLY FISK - Demo collectors must have
15764	D	50p	FILEIT v2.0 - Simple powerful freeform database
24096	W	40p	FILE MANAGER GUARD v2.06 - Guard your windows
11108	D	60p	FINTRIS v1.26 - One of the best Tetris clones
02460	D	50p	FLEXIBACK PLUS v4.0 - Excellent back-up system
34016	D	30p	FLIPPIN HUCK - If it moves, shoot it
33106	W	30p	FLOP v1.0 - Good multi level board puzzle game
26294	D	50p	FONT MAKER v2.0 - Makes TTFs & others
02814	W	80p	FONT MONSTER v3.5 - Superb TTF manager
09990	D	70p	FONTIME v2.7 - Font comparison & printing utility
27087	D	30p	FOOD FIGHT - The ultimate desktop destroyer
05322	D	30p	FORMATQM v2.0 - Automatic disk formatter
07204	D	60p	FORMGEN II - A favourite form designer
08691	D	40p	FORMULA 1 - A good algebra tutorial
26571	D	70p	FRENETIC v3.3 - Brilliant Abstract art creator
32196	D	170p	FUNBALL v1.0 - Brilliant arcade strategy game
26072	D	30p	GANJA DIGEST NO 58 - A Ganja 94 Emag
06650	D	100p	GATEWORLD v2.0 - Super arcade space game
04822	D	50p	GCSE MATHS v4.0 - Good revision material
33112	D	10p	GEEK CODE v3.0 - Check out your Geekiness
23481	D	30p	GET STONES II - Spectacular Breakout clone
25644	D	20p	GEM THE CRYSTALS v2 - Needs quick thinking
17737	D	20p	GETTING TONED - Guide by the Ragga Twins
26182	D	80p	GFXFX2 - Brill collection of PAS files
32219	D	20p	GIANT - Brilliant 4K demo
26079	D	20p	GLOSSARY OF INTERNET JARGON - All of it
05880	W	60p	GOLDWAVE v2.10 - Powerful sound processor
20478	D	80p	GRAPHIC DISPLAY SYSTEM v3.1G - Brill for all PCs
04292	D	80p	GRAPHIC WORKSHOP V7.0E - Image converter
33305	W	10p	GRAPHSKETCH v3.3 - Select & draw maths functions
32198	D	210p	GRIND v1.3 - MOD player with dancers
15782	D	90p	GROWIT MK III - Good gardening guide
25903	W	50p	HAC DOS v1.02 - Complete DOS reference
25904	W	50p	HAC SIMPLE v1.04 - Computers simply explained
24449	D	40p	HACKERS HANDBOOK - Hugo Cornwall edition
22900	D	40p	HACKING FAQs v1.1 - New version, masses of info
03367	D	60p	HARD DISK DIRECTOR v5.0 - File manager ++
22945	D	270p	HEARTQUAKE - Latest Iguana masterpiece
25735	D	100p	HERB POWER v3.0 - In depth colourful guide
32199	D	30p	HICKORY DICKORY DOCK - Tell time teacher
17022	D	70p	HIDMIG v3.0 - Creates Sirds and Stereograms
32220	D	30p	HHE v1.1 - Heretic Hack editor for fun alterations
08071	D	40p	HOOSIER CITY - Adventure for beginners
23215	D	30p	HOW CAN WE DO THIS - Environmental issues
10664	W	40p	ICON OF TERROR - Noisy Desktop vandal
12867	D	40p	INERTIA PLAYER 1.20 - Digital sound player
26193	D	50p	INFORMATION HIGHWAY ROADMAP - Very useful
12005	D	40p	INFOSPY v2.42 - Windows environment viewer
02469	D	60p	INTEGRITY MASTER v2.51 - Unique anti-virus
28294	D	50p	JAPANIMATIONS VOL 1 - Ten naughty girls
16189	D	50p	JELLY BEAN FACTORY - Unusual Tetris
08542	D	80p	JILL OF THE JUNGLE - Wild graphic adventure
16095	W	50p	JOL POOLS PLAZA v1.2 - UK football forecaster
34431	D	80p	JUGGLEKRAZY v1.0 - Learn to juggle
25704	W	170p	JUST BUTTONS v1.03 - Super Windows enhancer
26080	D	40p	KATE BUSH - Unusual topless snapshot
10643	W	40p	K-CHESS v2.0 - Attractively designed version
26082	D	10p	K-SPEED v4.0 - Good system & disc speed tester
25253	D	70p	KABBALAH - Text of Prophecy of the Chariot
02980	D	80p	KILOBLASTER v1.0 - Space shoot 'em up
13040	W	60p	KITH & KIN v2.03 - Geneology for Windows
07215	W	20p	KYE V2.0 - Brain game with level creator
05392	D	40p	THE KORAN - The E. H. Palmer translation
25669	D	30p	LA TOYA JACKSON - Super centrefold shot
12258	D	40p	LARSON COLLECTION - 5 Farside cartoons
08264	D	30p	LETTER ATTACK v2.2 - Childrens typing tutor
05488	D	40p	LITTLE BLACK BOOK v7.0 - Favourite address book
01990	D	50p	LITTLE LISTS v3.1 - Friendly & simple database
32188	D	20p	LIZ HURLEY - Nice topless shot
33986	D	20p	LMPTUL v2.0 - Edit Doom LMP files
18367	D	20p	LOAD & UNLOAD v2.22 - Control your drivers
13677	D	40p	LOADER LARRY v1.2 - Brilliant animated puzzles
20730	D	20p	LOGISYM v3.0 - Digital logic simulator/tutorial
26475	W	80p	LOTTERY MASTER v2.0 - Full featured UK system
33131	D	70p	LOTTERY WIZARD - Full featured UK program
22812	D	60p	LOTTO BUSTER - Powerful 6-49 system
22637	D	40p	LOTTO CHALLENGER v3.8 - Comprehensive system
08795	D	40p	LOTTO MATIC v1.23 - Good 6/49 system
23498	W	70p	MABRY SOFTWARE MEGA PACK - VBxs
33990	D	30p	MAD MEN AT WORK v3.00 - Must read for thinkers
25930	W	30p	MAGIC HEXAGONS v1.2 - Clever brain game
05706	D	40p	MAGIC DESK v3.22 - Icon based DOS menu system
07593	D	80p	MAJOR STRYKER v1.4 - Apogee space shoot 'em up
33091	D	30p	MARIO - Amazing reproduction of original
02596	D	40p	MATHS MANIAC v1.03 - Good drills for juniors
02479	D	40p	MAH JONGG v4.2 - Latest enhanced version
33139	D	10p	MC LAFFEYS VIRUS SCAN v1.0 - Good computer joke
08798	D	40p	MEAL MASTER v8.02 - Bet recipe organiser
23526	D	80p	MEAL MASTER RECIPES - 200 Thai cuisine dishes
26195	D	80p	MEAL MASTER RECIPES - 1301 Chicken variations
13061	W	40p	MEDIEVAL WAR v1.6 - Many featured war game
15540	D	30p	MEDITATIONS - Superb philosophical reading
05109	D	50p	MELODY MASTER v2.5 - Write, edit & play
25272	D	40p	MERLIN'S MUSIC v1.02 - Music tutorial & player
22696	D	40p	MICROBOFF v1.20 - Create electronic manuals
27086	W	140p	MOORAY'S SPHERE JONGG - Brill new Mahjongg
25713	W	170p	MOZART v1.3.8 - Create & edit sheet music
32200	D	100p	MR PACKFORD v1.0 - A really tough Pacman game
02089	D	260p	MSDOS INTERRUPT LIST v46A - 802 pages
16903	D	30p	MUSICAL TUTORIAL v1.1 - Children or adults
02065	D	70p	MUSICBASE v4.12 - Create, edit, print, play
23386	W	50p	MVP BRIDGE FOR WINDOWS v1.3 - Plays good game
25712	W	70p	MYSTERIES OF THE ORIENT - Ancient Puzzles
02869	D	40p	MYTHS ABOUT THE BIBLE - Little known facts
23899	D	140p	NEOPANTS v1.0 - 200 extra fonts for Neo programs
08725	D	120p	NEOPAINT v3.1C - The best DOS paint program
07068	D	40p	NINE MENS MORRIS v1.01 - Multi level board game

20368	W	20p	NINE MENS MORRIS FOR WINDOWS - As above
34591	W	50p	NOKIA MONITOR TEST v1.0A - Comprehensive
25185	D	80p	NOHMSI VIEWER v1.5 - Brilliant SVGA viewer
34326	D	240p	NOOON/STARS - ASM95 overall winner
04875	D	50p	NOTEWORTHY v1.90 - Write and print scores
05715	W	120p	NOTEWORTHY FOR WINDOWS v1.20 - As above
22958	D	40p	O J SIMPSON - Preliminary hearing transcript
10823	D	20p	OLIM'S LAW CALCULATOR v2.0 - Nice program
26091	D	40p	OLIVIA NEWTON JOHN - In suspenders & stockings
03819	D	40p	ONSIDE v2.0 - Print sideways on dot matrix
25661	D	20p	OPERATION OVERKILL - 10 levels for Wolf 3D
16657	D	40p	OPERATION VULTURE - You & your chopper
02671	D	60p	ORGANISE YOUR VIDEOS v6.0A - Powerful & easy
23059	D	230p	ORIENTAL GIRLS - 8 attractive XX girls
05977	D	20p	THE PACK RAT - Addictive scrolling arcade action
32238	D	20p	PAMELA ANDERSON - Revealing shot
32239	D	20p	PAMELA ANDERSON - With nothing on
08715	D	130p	PANIC v1.0 - Classic Future Crew Megademo
24389	D	30p	PARTITION RESIZER v1.1 - Leaves data untouched
11071	D	30p	PC-CONFIG v7.33 - Informative sysinfo program
04708	D	50p	PC-DRAFT II v3.26 - Drawing and design
23266	D	40p	PC DRUMMER v2.4 - Drum machine simulator
08802	D	40p	PC-ECAP v3.01 - AC Circuit Analysis program
03240	D	50p	PC-FASTYPE VGA v4.1 - One of the best typing tutors
04353	D	200p	PC-FILE v7.0 - Powerful relational database
04299	D	60p	PC-GLOSSARY v6.4 - Classic computer ref
23818	D	40p	PEER GYNT'S ONION - Alternative medicine
17195	W	20p	PENTAMINO v1.0 - Windows game of logic
12951	D	40p	PERSONAL CHALLENGE v1.1 - General trivia
04728	D	40p	PERSONAL TAROT v3.1 - Mysteries explained
22716	D	40p	PHREAKERS MANUAL v1.1 - Old but interesting
07145	D	30p	PIANO MAN v4.0 - Compose & play for Speaker
25720	W	50p	PIGS v1.0 - Exciting game of skill & strategy
26101	D	40p	PILE-UP v3.01 - A classic multi level tetris
23280	D	120p	PLETHORA v3.2 - Awesome DOS desktop
25722	W	30p	POSTER PROGRAM v1.5 - 10 times single sheet
26106	D	30p	POWER TEST v1.10C - Hearing & perfect pitch test
08581	D	40p	POWERCHESSE v5.3 - Best DOS Chess game
19531	D	20p	PRIME-IRFRAME - Assembly 94 demo winner
03783	D	50p	PRINT PARTNER v3.02 - Signs, posters & banners
22726	W	50p	PSYCHIC ADVISOR - Interesting answers
33961	D	40p	QUIZ MASTER - Create standalone quizzes
16549	D	70p	RACHEL'S DOLLS v2.2 - Dressing up game
25812	D	20p	RAMMER v1.01 - Possibly worlds strangest Tetris
05358	D	60p	RAMSEY'S CHING - Simulates Chinese oracle
23579	D	40p	READ-A-MATIC v1.0 - Brill text to EXE
21021	D	30p	RESNET v3.3 - Helps design resistor networks
19698	D	30p	ROSENTHAL UNINSTALL v3.0 - System clean-up
02335	W	50p	ROSENTHAL WNLITE v1.0 - EXE compressor
32201	W	50p	ROTTED v1.1 - Full featured ROTT level editor
23060	D	230p	SCANDINAVIAN GIRLS - 8 XX rated blondes
33182	W	50p	SCRABOUT v1.0 - Full featured scrabble
08733	D	40p	SCREEN THIEF v1.58 - Captures any screen
25696	D	140p	SECOND GUESS v1.0 - SVGA solitaire
27886	W	80p	SENSUOVX v2.0 - 20 interesting WAV files
20111	D	30p	SEX - WIZARDS - Alt. conf from the Internet
23960	D	40p	SHARDS v1.1 - VGA strategy & skill game
02846	D	50p	SHEZ v10.7 - Superb easy to use archiving shell
19459	W	40p	SHORTHAND FOR WINDOWS v3.0 - WP speedup
04614	D	40p	SHOWME SAVER v4.0 - Classic screen saver
22290	D	50p	SILLY DOOM - Adds humour to the violence
08203	D	50p	SIMPLY LABELS v4.02 - Multi featured but easy
26984	D	50p	SIMPSONS - Good multi track MOD
33048	D	50p	SIX HISTORIC AMERICANS - Their religious beliefs
33963	D	80p	SIX OF THE BEST - Good U X lottery system
33192	W	30p	SKI BEAR - Sking polar bears saver
15700	D	50p	SKY BOMBERS v1.0 - Shoot if it moves
02848	D	60p	SKYGLOBE v3.6 - See the stars on your screen
17964	D	80p	SKYROADS 3D v1.1 - Space highway cruising
20662	D	60p	SLICKS'N SLIDE v1.28 - Mini racing game
22770	D	40p	SOKOBAN94 - Brilliant VGA logic game
20780	D	30p	SOME PEOPLES FANTASIES - Internet conference
22645	D	30p	SOPHOCLES - Full text of the Oedipus Trilogy
23953	W	170p	SOUNDZ FOR WINDOWS v2.15 - Superb audio library
25670	D	50p	SPIROTRIS v1.2 - Strategy game with Snd FX
32216	W	20p	SQUAT FOR WINDOWS v1.0E - Clever windows toy
28724	D	100p	STAR SPECK - Amusing Star Trek parody
04269	D	40p	STUPENDOUS v5.0 - Powerful file & disc manager
10659	W	120p	SUNSHINE v4.05 - DOS & Windows tutorial
01900	W	40p	SUPERBAR v2.0N - Super productivity enhancer
32202	D	30p	THINGIES - Very clever novelty word game
27499	D	70p	THINKING IN C++ - Masses of useful source codes
32203	D	170p	THREAT v1.30 - Massive shoot-em-up action
04924	D	80p	TIME LORD v2.0 - PIM & much more
20711	D	30p	TODAY v3.6 - Recall historical events
06375	W	10p	TOPCAT - Cute desktop cat for cat lovers
17156	D	40p	TREK GURU - Trek enthusiasts info database
22013	D	40p	TREKKER TT FONTS - Three Trekkie type fonts
05389	D	50p	TURBO PASCAL TUTORIAL v2.6 - 20 lessons
11270	D	30p	TUTOR MASTER v1.0 - Beginners DOS tutorial
00083	D	100p	TUTOR.COM v6.2 - Comprehensive DOS tutorial
24325	D	80p	TWISTED EXISTENCE - Brilliantly weird demo
22661	D	50p	UFO REPORTS - Much fairly recent material
24413	D	80p	UK CLUB MEMBERSHIP - For club organisers
27084	W	80p	VB TIPS & TRICKS MR.95 - Hints & code
25992	D	30p	VECTOR PRO v1.1 - C & C++ Maths library
33059	W	100p	VIDE BACCARAT - Superb computer implementation
09389	D	90p	VIRUSCAN FOR WINDOWS v2.25 - Scans & cleans
25731	D	40p	WADMAN v1.01 - Convert 1 X Doom file to 2.0
23601	D	50p	WIBBLE v1.1 - Details of over 1000 UK BBSs
01895	W	80p	WINFRACT v17.3 - Powerful fractal generator
16032	W	60p	WINJAMMER v2.30 - Powerful Midi sequencer
09656	W	80p	WINSULTEK GOLD v3.0 - Super systems diagnostics
04622	W	50p	WINZIP v5.6 - Built in archiving or use PKZIP
17328	W	200p	WISDOM OF THE AGES v2.4 - 6000 quotations
24077	W	100p	WORD WISDOM TUTOR FOR WINDOWS - Eng/French
10203	D	50p	WORDY v3.12 - Career & construction game
11951	D	50p	WYNTER STONE'S CHING v1.2 - Latest version
21820	D	70p	XATAX v1.00 - Scrolling space arcade game
11952	D	40p	YOUR ESP TEST v1.5 - Find out with this test
04206	W	20p	ZIPAPER v1.3C - Wallpaper manager & save saver
02559	D	80p	ZPELLER v4.10 - Improves vocabulary & spelling
12282	D	70p	ZX SPECTRUM EMUL ATOR780 v3.02 - New

18. SVGA Monitor

My video card supports a very high resolution mode — why do I only see a scrambled screen when I try to use it?

As well as having a high resolution graphics card you also need a high resolution monitor. Not all monitors will work at 1024x768 standard high resolution SVGA mode let alone higher resolutions. So check your monitor specifications as well as the video card.

19. Accelerators

Will a graphics accelerator card make all my programs go faster?

No only programs that know how to make use of it will work faster. In general you need a driver that will allow the program to make use of its advanced features. Of course if you have a Windows driver all Windows applications will go faster.

20. PCI & VESA

My machine's graphics are very slow. Should I change to a PCI based graphics card?

Graphics hardware has become much faster recently and PCI and VESA bus based cards are certainly the fastest. If your machine has a PCI bus then this is the one to choose. VESA is almost as good but it's not the way of the future.

**CD-ROM****21. CD-ROM or hard disk**

Is a CD-ROM an alternative to buying a larger hard disk?

A CD-ROM isn't an alternative to a large hard disk although you can run some programs directly from CD. The problem is that CD-ROM is slower than hard disk and so at the least you need to load the programs you use most often onto hard disk. Most programs use a CD-ROM to store less frequently used data and multimedia video and sound clips.

22. Double speed or Quad?

I would like to buy a CD-ROM but don't know if I should spend the extra on a Quad or even faster model?

The speed refers to how fast the disc spins and how fast data can be read from. There isn't much point in fitting a fast CD-ROM to a machine that cannot make sense of the extra speed so it's all a question of balance — but this said Quad speed drives are rapidly becoming the standard.

23. Cleaning drives

I've heard that you need to clean a CD-ROM drive regularly — but how?

Don't worry about opening it up or doing anything complicated — just go down to your local hi-fi store and buy an audio

CD drive cleaning disk. Don't tell them that you want it for a CD-ROM however, it will only worry them!

24. IDE Drives

Are IDE CD-ROM drives the best?

Yes — but they are sometimes more difficult to fit than alternatives. If you have a sound card installed which supports other types of drive then it is worth considering non-IDE drives

25. Slowing down

Suddenly my CD-ROM has started to take a long time to load programs and produce directories. Why?

Maybe it's bored? Seriously though, if a CD or the reading mechanism is dirty a CD-ROM drive will attempt to re-read the same data repeatedly until it gets it right — and this slows everything down. If this only happens on a single CD then the solution is to clean it. If it happens on all your CDs the solution may be to clean the drive.

**SOUND****26. 8 v 16 bit**

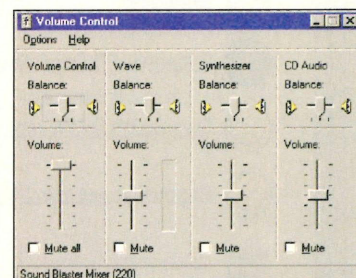
Do I need a 486 to use a 16-bit sound card?

No 16-bit refers to the accuracy of the sound reproduction not to the type of machine needed to use it. Lower cost 8-bit cards sound as good as 16-bit ones until you plug in a good set of speakers!

27. No Sound

When I play an Audio CD I have to listen on headphones. Why doesn't it play over the sound card speakers?

You have to connect the output of the CD-ROM drive to the sound card using a special cable — one would have been provided with the drive. If the drive is connected then it could be that its volume has been turned down — use the sound card's mixer control to check this.



▲ **Make sure the volume is turned up in your control panel!**

28. PC speaker

Even though I have a sound card I still hear silly beeps through my machine's built-in speaker. Can I change this?

Some software only knows how to make noises via the built-in speaker and will

ignore your sound card. You can connect the speaker output to an input on the sound card, but this needs a special cable and there is a risk of getting it wrong and damaging the sound card. My advice is to live with the beeps!

29. Digitised sound

Why can't I hear synthesised speech from some games?

It could be because the sound card is installed incorrectly — check for an IRQ, port or DMA clash. However, some machines do not seem to be able to work correctly with digitised sound created using a DMA channel — the IBM Blue Lightning motherboard is one, but there are others based on the UMC chip set. To correct the problem is a difficult procedure involving soldering. So in many cases a motherboard upgrade is probably the simpler option.

30. MIDI

What is the MIDI connector on the back of my sound card used for?

You can use it to connect a MIDI musical instrument you only need a cable and then your PC can record the notes you play and play them back. The important thing to realise is that this isn't an audio recording but a record of which keys you press.

**JOYSTICKS AND MICE****31. Analog joysticks**

Why can't I use the joystick from my old Atari games machine?

Most games machines use digital joysticks which only give you up, down, left and right. A PC however, uses an analog joystick — much better since this gives you all this plus the many positions and directions in between. In short, you need an analog joystick to connect to the PC.

32. Digital PC joysticks

Some games are impossible to play with an analog joystick. Is there a viable alternative?

Yes. There are digital joysticks specially designed for use with the PC which connect to a standard joystick port. Using one of these you only get four directions which makes playing platform and similar games easier.

33. Sticky stick

My joystick has suddenly become very jumpy and I can't control my screen position very well. What's wrong with it?

Joysticks wear out — it's as simple as that. The only exception to this rule are the much more expensive optical joysticks. You can try some switch cleaner squirted inside — but even if this works the problem will be back fairly soon.

34. Mouse driver

Why can I use my mouse in some DOS programs, but not in others?

Some DOS programs "know" about how a mouse works and will make use of it. Others expect you to tell them how the mouse works by loading a mouse driver. Look for a program called something close to Mouse.com and load this before running the program.

35. Light shy mouse

Just recently my mouse has stopped working when the sun shines — any suggestions?

This isn't a joke! Some lower cost mice have very thin cases that let strong light through and this interferes with the position sensing electronics which uses light. The only solution is curtains!

**WINDOWS****36. Crashing**

I would use Windows 3.1 much more than I do now, but it keeps on crashing with strange error messages. Is there a way to stop this?

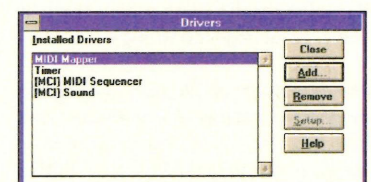
Windows isn't 100% perfect and badly written applications can crash it. Even so you shouldn't see a crash so often as to make the whole system unusable. If the problem only happens when you are running a particular application then the application is to blame. If it happens with a range of applications then it could be a hardware problem — either a configuration error or a real problem with the machine.

You can buy programs which test your machine and your Windows configuration First Aid for Windows for example.

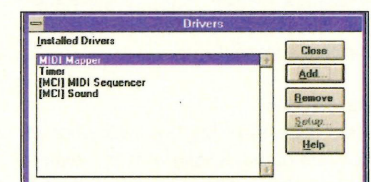
37. No sound in Windows

My sound card works fine in DOS, but I don't hear anything from it if I am in Windows. How can I make it work?

You need to install Windows drivers. Open the Control Panel and select the add/remove drivers utility. You should then be able to select your sound card from the list of drivers presented.



▲ **Select Add to add a new driver and then ...**



▲ **... select your sound card.**

38. Slow Windows

When I try to run more than a single program Windows slows down far too much — it seems to be working over-time on the disk drive. What can I do?

The problem is insufficient memory. The disk is working hard because large chunks of program are being written to it to free memory — this keeps you waiting. Add more memory and the problem will go away.

39. Windows 95 upgrade

If I upgrade to Windows 95 will I need to upgrade my 486DX2-66 or increase the 8Mb of RAM?

Windows 95 is far more sensitive to the amount of RAM available than Windows 3.1. Increase the RAM to at least 12Mb and preferably 16Mb. The processor is fine for now.

40. Running DOS apps

I have lots of trouble running DOS applications under Windows — is Windows 95 any better?

Yes much better. In Windows 3.1 you were generally unsurprised if advanced DOS applications like games did not work. Using Windows 95 however, you will generally be unsurprised if they do work. You do need to take some time to find out how to set up DOS applications in Windows 95 though.

**COMMS/INTERNET****41. Null modem**

I'm trying to get a multi-player game working, but it says it needs a "null" modem to connect machines together. What is this?

A null modem is just a cable wired so that you can connect two PCs via their serial ports. It isn't difficult to wire up a null modem cable but it isn't just a matter of connecting pin 1 to pin 1 and so on — so it is simpler to buy one.

42. COM confusion

I have installed an internal modem but the software I am using cannot seem to find it. What might be wrong?

The most common problem with internal modems is that they are set to use COM port two. This is fine as long as your machine doesn't already have COM2 installed. If it does then your only choices are to disable it — look in your machine's manual — or move the internal modem to COM3 — look in the modem's manual.

43. Too fast

I am thinking of buying a V34 modem but one of the bulletin boards I want to use only has a slower modem. Does this mean I have to buy a slower modem?

No, all the current modem standards are backward compatible — which means that a V34 modem will work with a V32 modem and earlier standards.

44. Sending Files

I use the Internet mostly for fun but occasionally I would like to send a file to a friend. How can I do this when the email facility I have access to only seems to let me send text?

You can only send text in emails over the Internet — unless you go to some extra trouble. The simplest method is to convert the file to text using a program called Uuecode. When the text is received the file is recovered using Uudecode. Alternatively you can use an email program, like Eudora, that supports MIME which will automatically convert the file for you. All of these files can be downloaded over the Internet using FTP.

45. WWW

I am new to using the Internet and I use a browser to surf the World Wide Web pages. This is fine but I keep on hearing about FTP, Gopher and other things. Is there any more to the Internet than the World Wide Web?

Yes and no! The Internet is a collection of computers located all over the world, which are connected together, and they then provide a variety of services for example, FTP and Telenet. The important point is that you can use them all via your WWW browser and you will hardly notice the difference.

**Multimedia and creative****46. Film editing**

Can I edit video tapes using a PC?

At the moment digitising a video tape, editing it within the PC and re-recording it is still too expensive. The best you can manage is to use two video recorders or a camcorder and a VCR controlled by your PC to automate the editing.

47. MPEG

If I can view MPEG movies on my PC why can't I create them?

MPEG movies are compressed and you need a special MPEG card to decompress them. The difficulty is that MPEG compression takes a lot longer and is much more complicated than the equivalent decompression. This means that you need a lot of hardware to create an MPEG movie.

48. Recordable CD

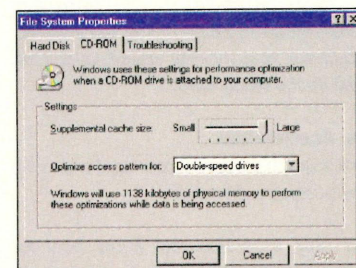
Can I use a recordable CD drive to make my own audio discs?

Yes you can, but you will need some software to prepare the digitised audio data to the correct format — Corel's CD Creator for example.

49. Slow multimedia

Please, I need your assistance! When I view a multimedia film clip on my machine it starts and stops. The clips are running from a double speed CD-ROM drive. Is there anything I can do to make it smooth? Any help will be great.

If you have enough RAM you can allocate it larger buffers or a cache. You need to look at the documentation for the CD-ROM drive to find out how to do this or use the system manager if you are using Windows 95. If this doesn't work you need a faster CD-ROM drive and/or machine!



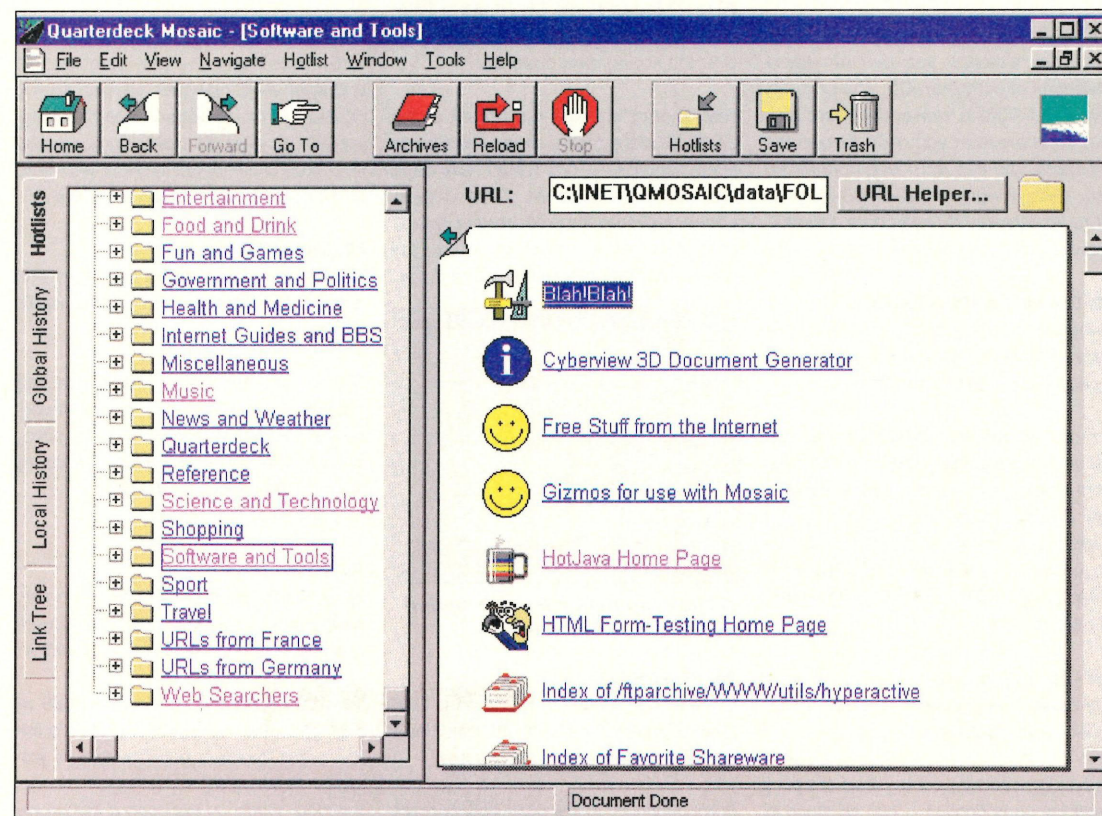
▲ Increase the cache to smooth multimedia performance.

50. Good answers

Where can I find the solution to all my PC problems?

In the next 50 issues of PC Review! Subscription details are on page 58.

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▲ You can access most than just Internet WEB pages with a WEB browser, see question 45.

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Fan mail, Hate mail, E-mail

★ STAR LETTER ★

Windows 95?

Yes Please

Throughout your coverage of Windows 95 you've been informing us on how much easier gamesplaying and development will become with its advent. This is true, but it also means that individuals can now start dishing out their game ideas for the consumption of the hungry games player. I've had a stab at developing DOS games but I am always stopped by the brick walls that are sound, EMS and SVGA and so on.

The older DOS machines were a doddle to develop with, but problems arose when hardware designers all set their own standards for sound, graphics and so forth. Windows 95 takes the headache out of this and now it's even theoretically possible, for example, for me to raytrace an animation and let Windows worry about how to handle it.

The point of all this is that maybe soon we will see individuals producing games that will reshape the industry. Doom did it; maybe we are on the verge of another revolution: power to the individual.

David Evans
Bournemouth

Windows 95?

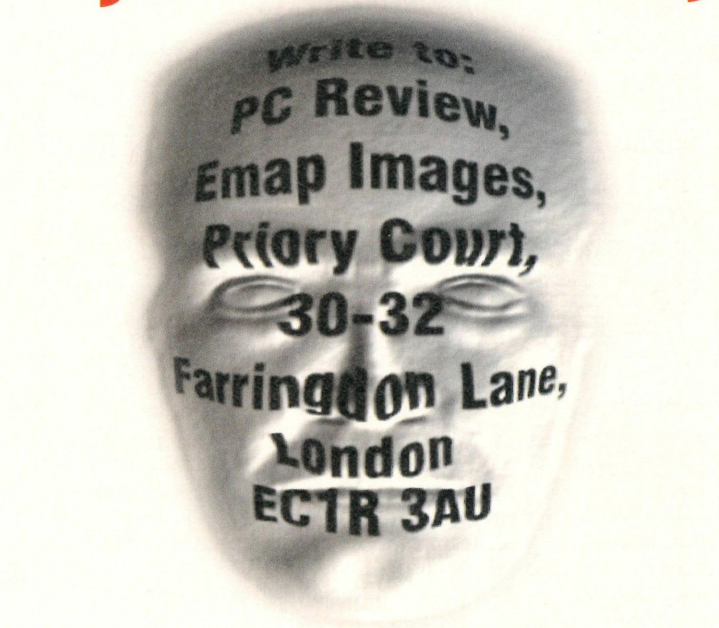
No thanks

Congratulations on a great mag. I just thought it may be a good idea to write and air my views on Windows 95. I really don't see what the fuss is about. "Wow! A 32-bit multitasking operating system!" people say. Take a look at the competition. Acorn have had RISC OS for almost a decade now, and the Mac has System 7. I really don't see what Win95 has more of that either of these two don't, except support!

That is another thing I can't understand — why a technology with such serious drawbacks (ie MS-DOS) has survived and even prospered with so many other choices of machine. I mean, 640k base memory limits — how ridiculous! Have you ever bought a game for the PC that has run first time? No? Neither have I — and I strongly suspect that no-one has. However I've rarely bought a game for my Archimedes that has not run first time — and when it doesn't, it's almost invariably a fault that can be sorted in seconds. No mucking about with bootfiles to gather every loose scrap of base memory.

I know that Win95 is supposed to end all this, but come on Microsoft, isn't it just a bit late?

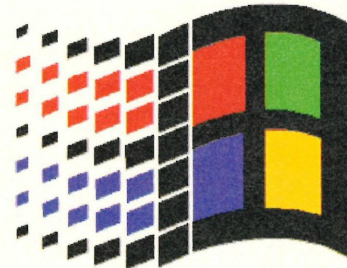
John Maclean
Midlothian



It might be good to talk, but we like it even more when you write, so send your scribblings to the place on the face.



▲ **Fury3 — Death and destruction Windows 95-style. Think you could knock this up in five minutes? Well, maybe not.**



▲ **Windows 95 in all its 32-bit glory. Too little too late?**

been light-years ahead of the PC's for years, but the PC still sold (and is selling) by the truckload, so there must be something else about the platform which attracts people to it.

As to whether it will really change the way PC games are created, only time will tell: it seems unlikely that it will make a huge difference, simply because most users aren't interested in programming at all. No doubt programmers will have an easier time because all the hardware compatibility is already handled, but at what cost? From what we have already seen, it is only users with high-end machinery who will be able to benefit from Windows 95, and as usual, the rest of us will just have to muddle along as best we can.

Controversy ahoy!

I often read in yours and other magazines about the problems of sexism in games, or the rise of graphic violence in entertainment, or even the problem of games being overpriced. In fact, so much has been written on these controversies that I have become sick of hearing about them.

What I have never seen in any magazine that I have read however, is any mention of racism in the computer games industry. What racism, I hear you say? Well, while I admit that there is an admirable lack of overt racial prejudice in computer games, it must be said that racism by omission is still racism. To be more precise, how many non-white heroes have you seen in computer games? When was the last time you saw a black computer character that was not a criminal or a sports person, or an oriental who was not a martial arts expert? And that's not to mention your own comment in the Cyberjudas review (Issue 47) — "any game that lets you nuke France is a true winner".

It's time that the computer industry realised that not every computer games player is a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male, and that there really should be more awareness of the cultural and racial variety that makes up the world in which we all live.

Michael Keating
Redditch

You make a good point, Michael. While in general the computer industry is relatively free of direct racial prejudice, there is a noticeable bias towards a white, western viewpoint. This is almost certainly related to the fact that the majority of software is produced by white westerners, but this is no excuse, in the same way as it is not an excuse to blame sex-

Everybody (including Microsoft, I think) knows that Win95 was too long in coming, but now it's here, whether we like it or not. However, in some ways it's rather pointless to compare it to the Archimedes or Mac OS because neither of these is any good to a PC user! Everybody knows that the Mac OS has

ism on the predominance of males over females in the industry. We can only hope that, by raising awareness of the problem, the attitudes that caused it can be changed.

As to Rik's comment in the Cyberjudas review, let's hear the response from the man himself:

"Racism is about oppression. The blacks have been oppressed for countless generations and have a right to be up in arms about such a bigoted, evil way of thinking. The French, however, have been oppressed once in their history, during WW2, and are now enjoying a healthy economy, and an emergence as a World super-power. Take Eric Cantona, for instance, just because of his Gallic footballing flair people strongly believe that his aggressive, even dangerous, behaviour should be forgiven. And he even has the gall to believe that he was the victim of a racist attack - this is crap, if I kicked every person who questioned my origins I'd be Jackie bloody Chan by now. That said, if I offended any French people out there, well, c'est la vie."

Charity begins...

I own a small business and we're currently upgrading our computer system, which means that we're going to be left with a whole lot of very old, rather obsolete machinery that we can't use and have no space to store. I was wondering if you might know of some sort of charitable organisation that will take these computers off our hands and do something useful with them?

Andy Sylvester
Wokingham

It's good to hear that some people out there have their heart in the right place. Unfortunately, I am not aware of one particular charity that deals with obsolete computer hardware. However, I think you'll find that most charities will accept the donation of old computers — many are glad of such donations because they themselves cannot afford even "cheap" machines. If any reader out there is aware of a charity that specialises in this sort of thing, then please let us know at the normal address.

Roll up! Roll up! Write a letter and win a fabulous software prize beyond your wildest dreams...



▲ **Primal Rage** — not exactly taxing on the brain cells, but then, who cares? As long as you get to beat up your friends, it's got to be fun.

Arcade classics?

What is happening to the PC? A few months ago, you could rest assured that nine out of the top ten games produced on this platform would be well-crafted, long-lasting, and, well, adult games that would appeal to that sector of the population likely to be able to afford a machine costing the best part of a thousand quid.

But recently I have noticed a trend towards games of a rather more... childish nature. By that I mean titles like *Primal Rage* (farting dinosaurs?) and *Street Fighter II* (joypad junk), *Aladdin* and the *Lion King* (Disney cuteness overload), and the biggest crime of them all, the vastly overrated no-brainer *Doom* (and its multitude of offspring). What is the world coming to? Is the PC set to degenerate into no more than an expensive console copycat, or is it just that the gamesplaying public is returning to a second childhood? And all this talk of retro-gaming, eulogising the "good old days" of 8-bit home computers... Please!

James Small
Bristol

We're sorry to interrupt you James, but this letter was beginning to go on rather too long, and we were falling asleep.

It takes all sorts to make a world, and therefore it takes all sorts of games to keep the word amused — here in the PC Review offices we argue all the time about what constitutes a good game. Some people like simulations (Andy and Cal) and some of us like blasting the hell out of some innocent civilians (everybody else). The way the PC market has developed, it seems that what was once a computer only for the technically-minded, has now become an all-round entertainment platform, as well as a powerful working tool.

It is increasingly the case that families are buying PCs for the home, so soft-

ware is required that will interest younger gamers as well as more mature ones (and what's wrong with farting dinosaurs?). If you like simulations and strategy games, there are still plenty out there to choose from, but now there's more choice for everyone else too. So everyone's happy, right?

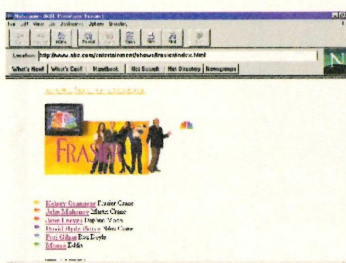
A newbie speaks

This may seem like a dumb question, because it seems like everybody knows the answer these days, but I have to ask because I'm beginning to feel a bit left out. My question is: just what the hell is the Internet? It's everywhere, but it seems like all the newspapers and magazines that I read just assume that everyone knows what it is. I don't, and I'm confused. Please help.

Dazed and Confused
Glasgow

Nice name you have there, Mr Confused. Anyway, you needn't worry, there are plenty of people out there who don't know what the Internet is, they just don't like to admit it for fear of ridicule. So for those of you who missed it the first time round, here is our easy-to-follow definition.

The Internet is a world-wide network of computers, all joined via the telephone lines. In order to make it an economical proposition for the ordinary



▲ **The Interent** is just one big happy computerised community, covering the globe in untainted peace and happiness. Probably.

user (who might not be able to afford international dialling costs), these computers are linked in such a way that information can be passed in a sort of relay; if, for example, I wished to access some information on a computer over in Australia, I would call a local Service Provider (someone who runs an Internet service), and give them the location of the information. They would then access the information site on my behalf, and return the information to me. As a result, I have only paid the cost of the call to the service provider — usually only a local call (as well as a small service charge, of course).

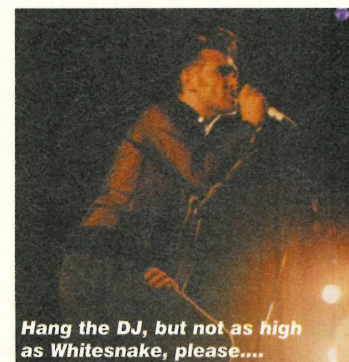
As to the nature of the Internet itself, well, that's harder to define. In some ways it's like a vast, unregulated library, with huge amounts of information stored in a rather haphazard way. No-one "runs" the Internet, so no-one really has control over what information is there, or where it is stored. If you are going to use the 'net regularly, one of your most valuable tools is a search engine, which will help you find the information that you are looking for. But it's also a cheap means of mass communication, which makes it a good medium for small groups to reach large numbers of people.

On a different note...

I have been a PC Review reader for some time, and I particularly like the changes you have made recently — the new staff certainly seem to be a smart and cheery lot (*Why thanks - Ed*) and I have enjoyed finding out more about you all in the Hatstand section at the end of the magazine. Anyway, to get to the point, this may seem rather a strange request, but I'd be interested to hear what sort of music you all like.

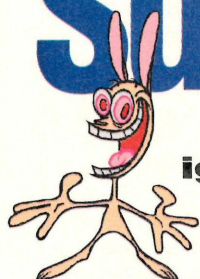
Geoff Morris
Delft, Holland

A strange request indeed, but here goes: Steve likes Morrissey; both Rik and Ian like Blur and their ilk; Pat likes Skunk Anansie and anything else with loud guitars; Jim likes Nine Inch Nails and anything that sounds like a multiple-car road accident (or Whitesnake — Ed); Andy likes ZZ Top; and Cal likes silence. The result? Many music-oriented office disputes...



Hang the DJ, but not as high as Whitesnake, please....

Surf Of the Month



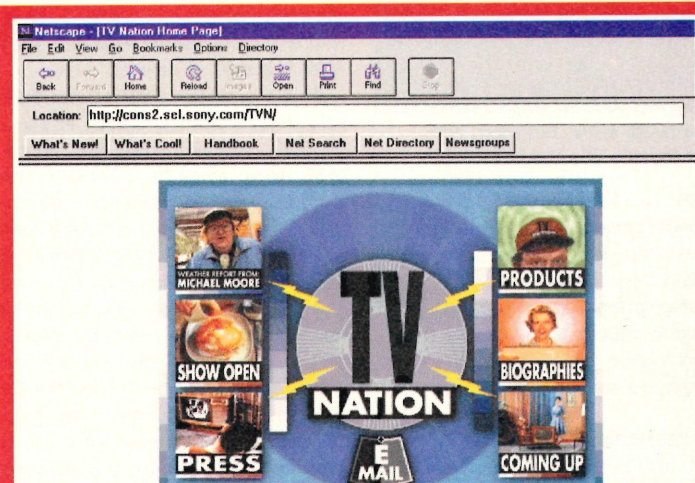
Television, the drug of the nation — feeding ignorance and breathing radiation. Pat Fox, professional couch potato, takes to the net in search of televisual titillation.

KEY

00:50
£ 00.00

Top: time taken
Bottom: amount spent

All prices are estimated at 4p per minute, local call rate off peak.



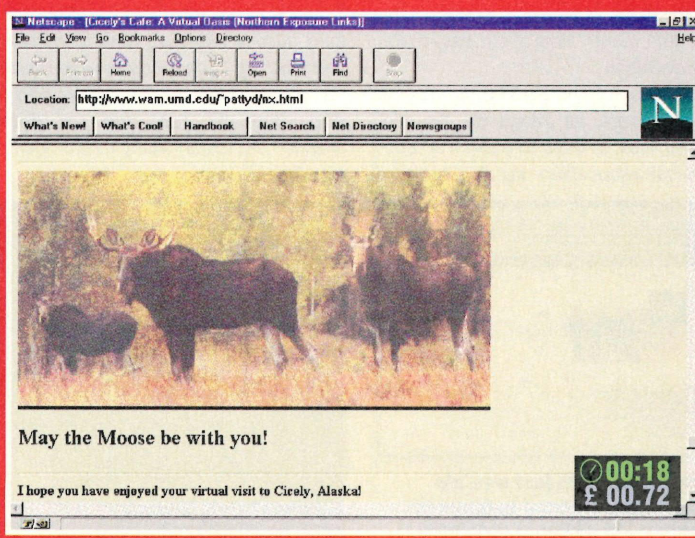
<http://cons2.sel.sony.com/TVN/>

Relaxing into my habitual TV slouch, I start my TV surf at the site of what is without doubt the funniest programme on TV (although the series has finished now). Michael Moore's TV Nation. If you failed to catch it on TV you can get a taste of what you missed on this official site, which is maintained by the people who make the programme — including comments from Michael Moore himself. There are even some TV Nation Polls — like "29% of those surveyed think that the guy who first put the "Great" in front of "Britain" probably meant it as a joke".

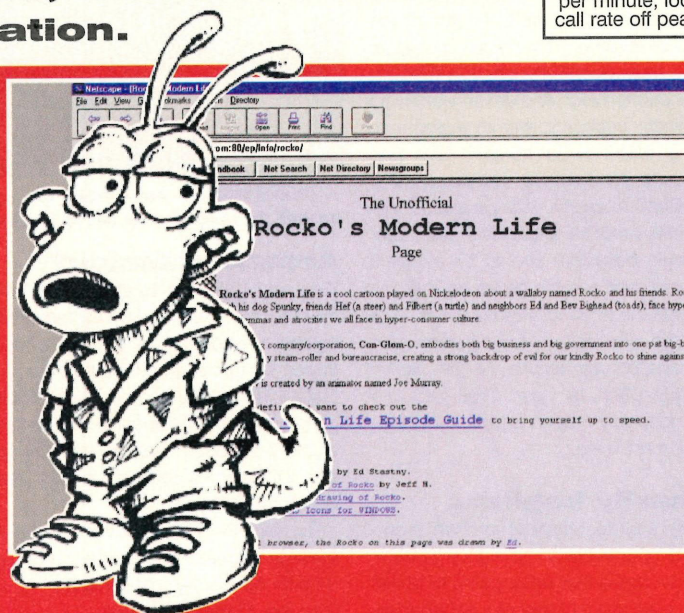
00:14
£ 00.56

<http://www.wam.wmd.edu/~pattyd/nx.html>

Sticking to the US theme, I travel up to Alaska and drop in on the Northern Exposure site, where I found some pretty pics and lot of news and views about the show. I was also most shocked to discover that the programme looks likely to die out now that the third series has been made. I resolve to write a stern e-mail to the accursed TV execs who would even dream of axing such a cool show, and move on.



00:18
£ 00.72



<http://www.expance.com/ep/artlit/entities/squakwalker.html>

<http://www.expance.com:80/ep/info/rocko/>

So I go in search of something a little more unusual — and where better to look than on Public Access TV? A quick nose around on Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>) reveals a varied selection of bizzarities, the most interesting of which was something called SquakWalker, a channel in Nebraska, broadcasting 'art-slanted, surreal and silly videos'. I am particularly curious to see 'Pancakes', which purports to be 'a surrealist sitcom about a clown and a prostitute' — the mind boggles. On the same site I also find a page devoted to Rocko's Modern Life, the cartoon about a wallaby, his dog Spunky and his best friend, Hefer the cow. Don't ask.

00:37
£ 01.48

<http://www.nbc.com/entertainment/shows/frasier/index.html>

<http://pmwww.cs.vu.nl/service/sitcoms/GraceUnderFire>

Okay, I'll come clean, I'm actually a closet US sitcom freak, so I take this opportunity to check out a couple of my fave shows — Frasier, the Cheers spin-off about the po-faced psychiatrist, and Grace Under Fire, a sort of nineties' Roseanne. The Frasier site turns out to be pretty but rather bland, with a few dodgy biographies and some press photos, while the Grace Under Fire page is basically a list of show synopses and some enormous video clips of the title sequence. I come away most disappointed.

00:46
£ 01.84

SHOWS | NBC TV SCHEDULE

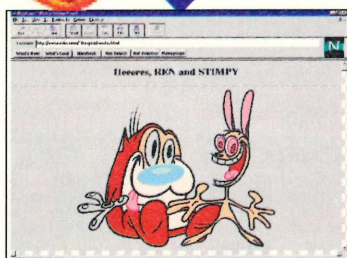
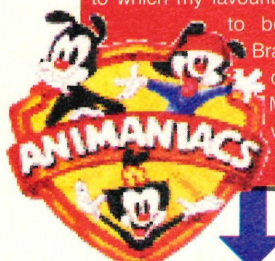


FRASIER

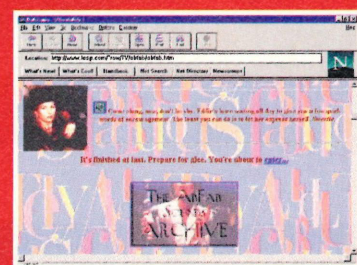


<http://www.cris.com/~lkarper/rands.htm>
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/clamen/misc/tv/Animaniacs/Animaniacs.html>

Which put me in the mood for more cartoons — in particular, those old faves Ren and Stimpy. With stacks of pictures and sounds from the cartoon, this page is great if you want to customise your Windows backgrounds, or system noises (you may need a utility called Sox to convert .AU files to .WAV files — find it at <http://www.radio.cbc.ca/radio/tools/tools.html>). The Animaniacs site is in much the same vein, but it also includes quotes from the series — in particular, a complete list of Pinky's responses to Brain's question, "Are you pondering what I'm pondering?" to which my favourite response has to be "I think so, Brain, but if they called them Sad Meals, kids wouldn't buy them."

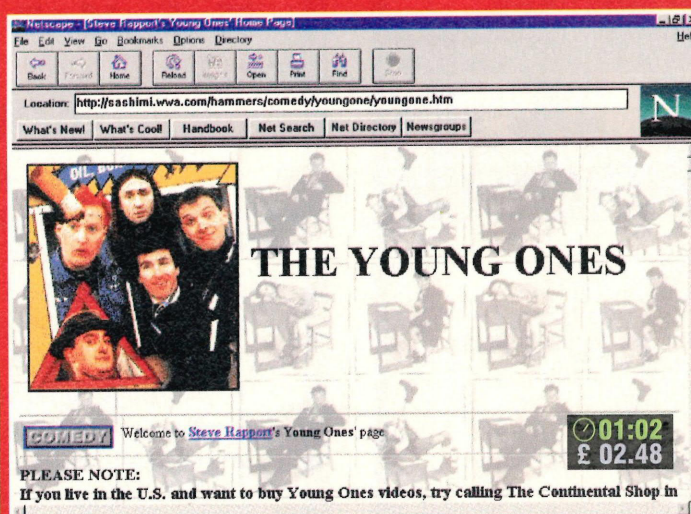


01:09
£ 02.60



<ftp://ftp.netcom.com/pub/ha/hammers/comedy/blkadder/blkadder.htm>
<http://www.loop.com/~raw/TV/abfab/abfab.htm>

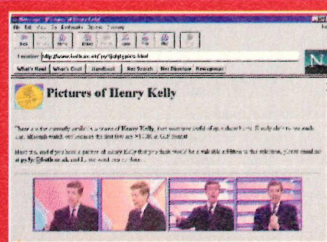
But all this has too much of a US feel, so I decide to take a look at some sites of a more anglophile nature. I make a start at the Blackadder site. Needless to say, there are the usual pictures and FAQ files, but there is also a spot for people to suggest their own lyrics to the Blackadder theme song — if that's what turns you on. Then I discover what is possibly the best-looking page I've ever seen — the Absolutely Fabulous Sound archive, where you will find hundreds of audio clips from the show. Unfortunately there's little else, besides some bizarre links to sites like the Parking Committee for London homepage.



<http://sashimi.wva.com/hammers/comedy/youngone/youngone.htm>

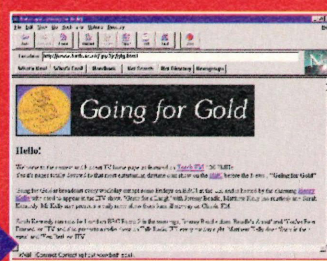
And so finally I end up at what I consider to be among the best pages on the entire Net — the Young Ones homepage. Not only does it give you access to pictures and sounds, but some dedicated soul has typed in the entire scripts from the series, and there's even a complete transcript of all of Rick's poems. Who could forget the immortal lines, Oh Neil! Neil! Orange peel! ...a classic. Anyway, after that I feel that my thirst for TV trivia is sated, so I head home... to watch TV — the real thing that is. Goodnight and God bless.

01:47
£ 04.28



<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~py3jc/gfg.html>

Somehow I manage, despite my own best efforts to avoid it, to stumble across a homepage entirely devoted to that Acme of all tacky gameshows, the downright criminal Going for Gold. There I find some disturbingly sychophantic descriptions of a certain Henry Kelly, as well as pics of same, and even more bizarrely some sounds from the show, such as the buzzer going off, or Mr Kelly with his immortal catchphrase "You're playing catchup!". I run away quickly and try to forget all about it.

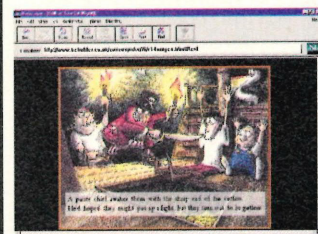


Net News

Let me tell you a story...

<http://www.beholder.co.uk/concuspidor/i1/c1.html>

As good a website as we've ever seen, this is a great interactive storybook called Concuspidor & the Grand Wizard of Many Things. Read about the adventures of the crafty Concuspidor and his best friend Phlegm the Pelican — it's a riot.



New news

<http://www.m2.com/nw>
<http://metrotel.co.uk/theweek/index.html>

If it's news you're after, have a look on these sites. M2 offers a daily news update, whereas The Week is, surprisingly enough, a round-up of the weeks' events. You need never buy a newspaper again.

Into the void

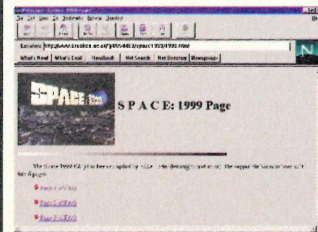
<http://metro.turnpike.net/V/void/index.html>

The word "weird" might have been invented for The Void, a bizarre collection of poetry, reviews and general strangeness. Find out who really killed JFK, and exactly what McDonalds is allegedly putting into its moreish drinks...

Gerry Anderson Homepage

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/~p054463/fab.html>

If you're a fan of all things string-borne, then you'll love this fab (geddit?) page devoted to the puppetmeister himself. There's info here on everything from Fireball XL5 to the brand new Space Precinct. Thunderbirds are go! etc.



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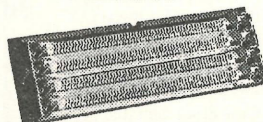
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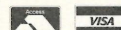
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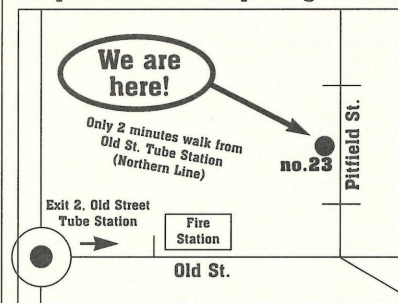


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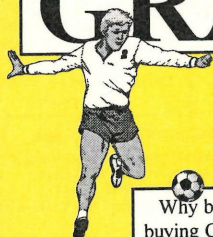
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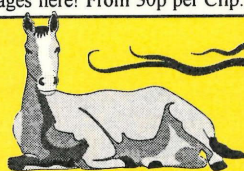
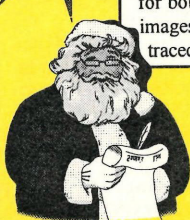
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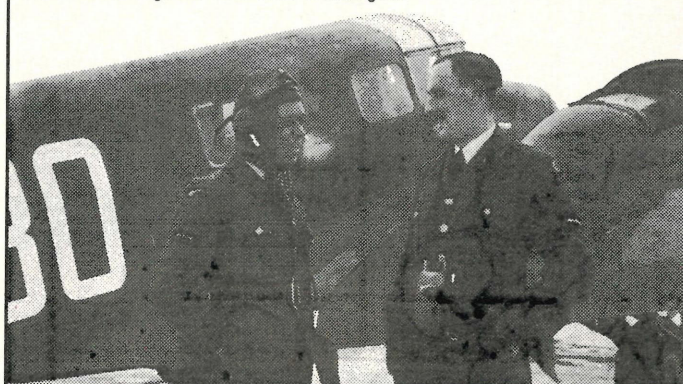
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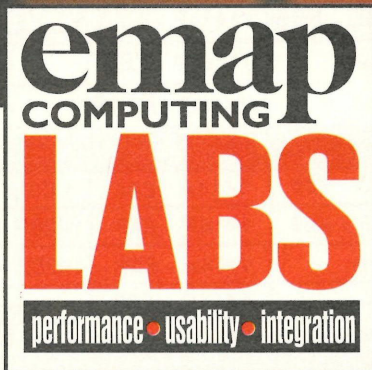
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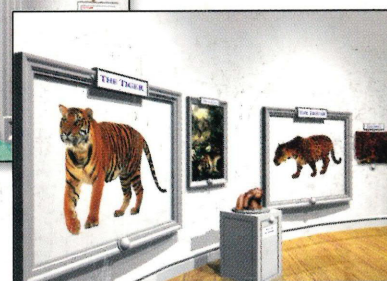
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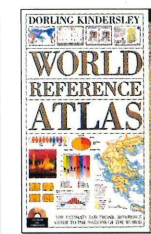
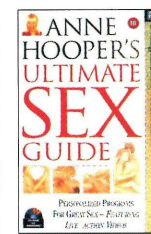
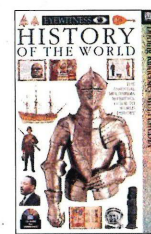
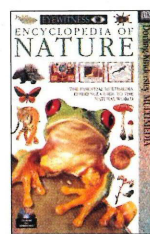
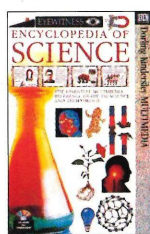
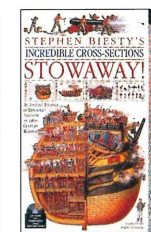
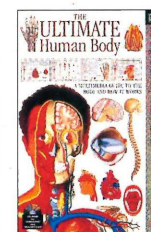
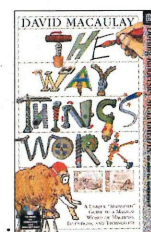
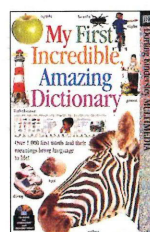
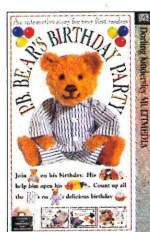
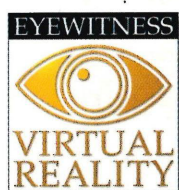
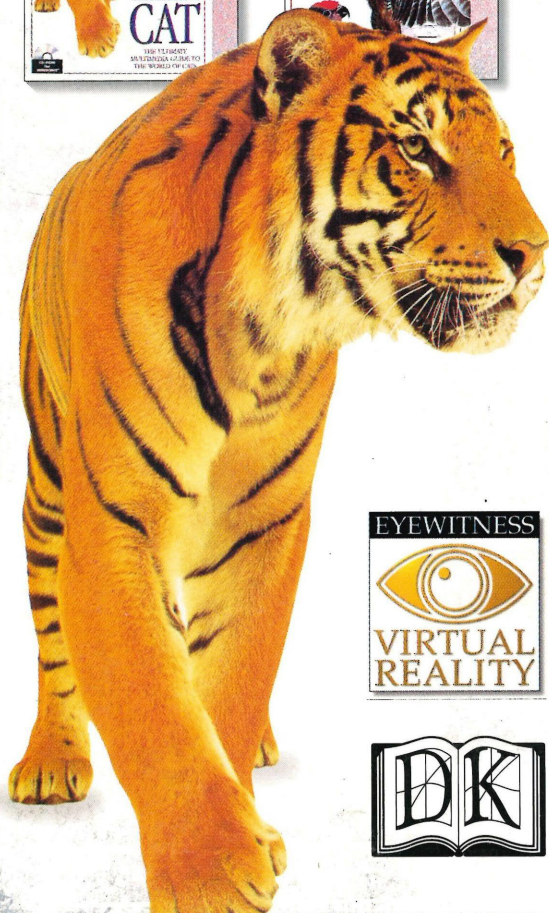
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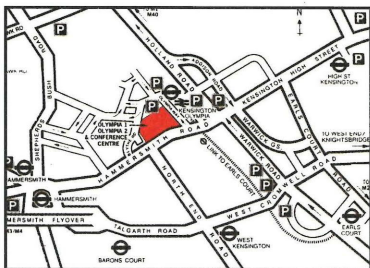
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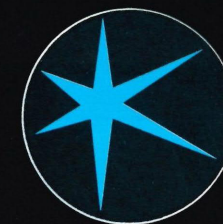
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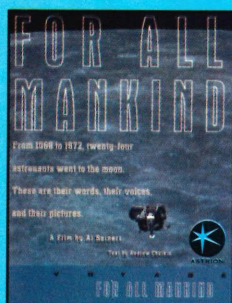
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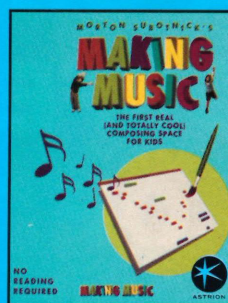
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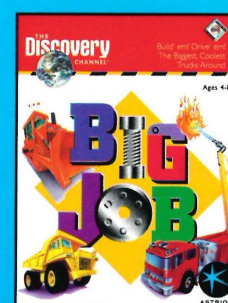
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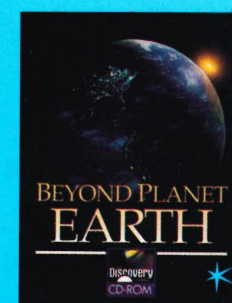
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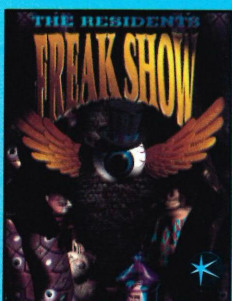
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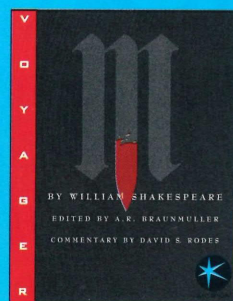
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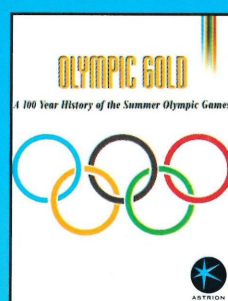
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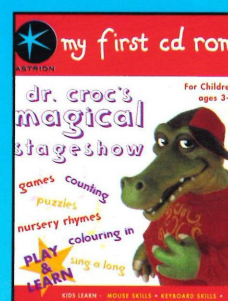
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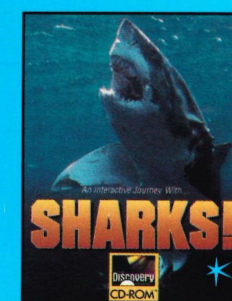
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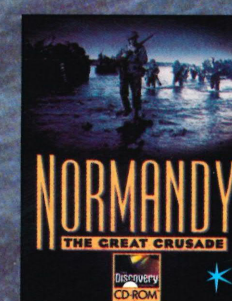
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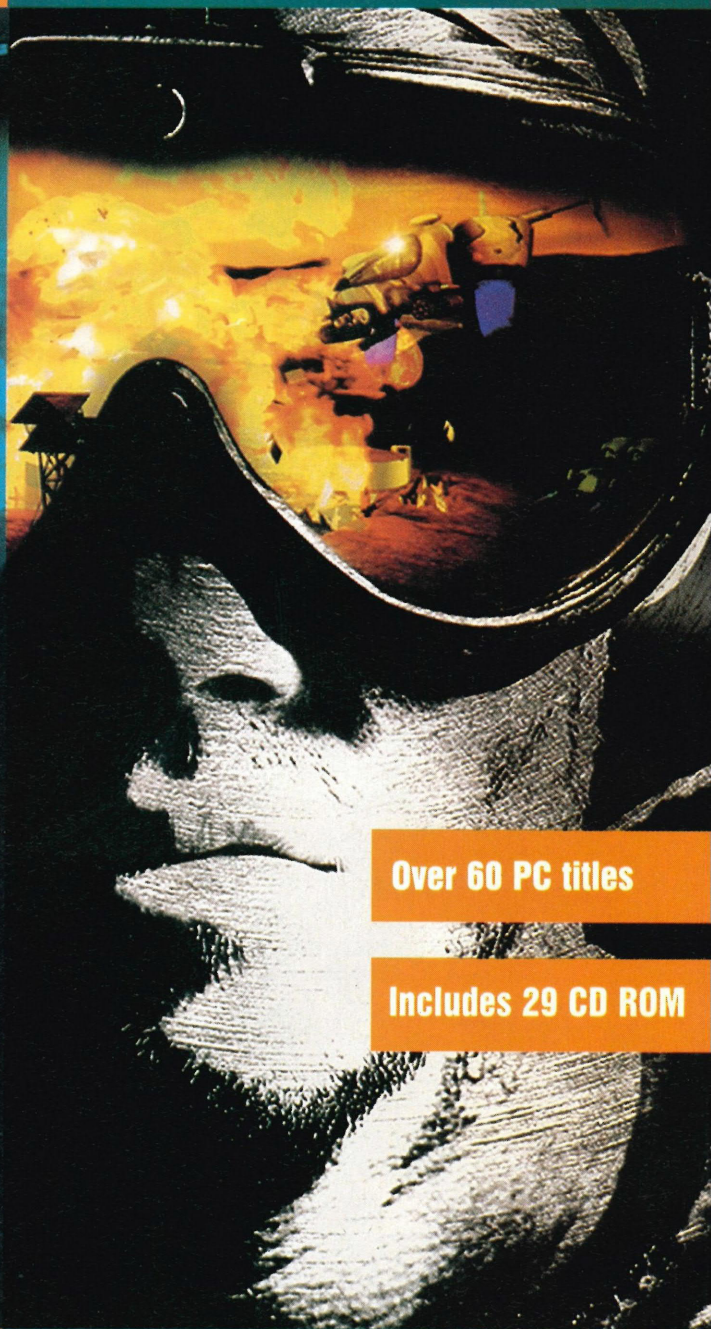
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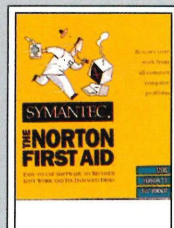
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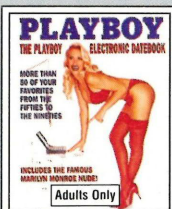
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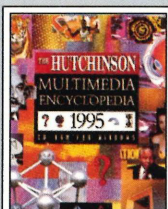
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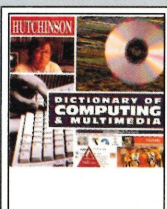
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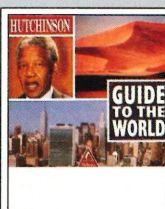
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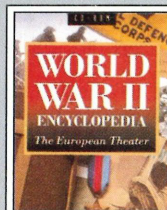
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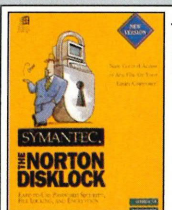
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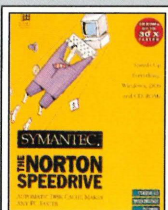
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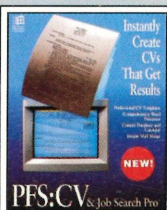
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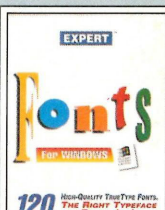
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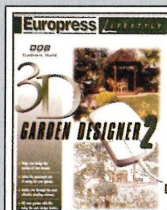
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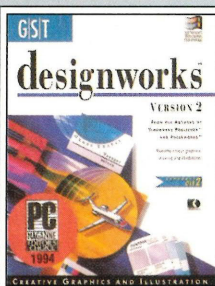
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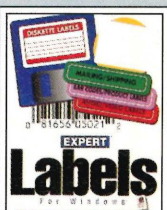
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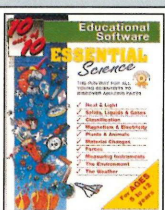
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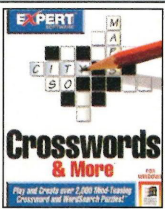
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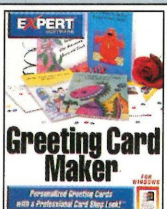
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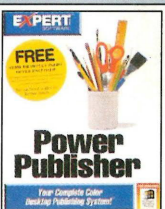
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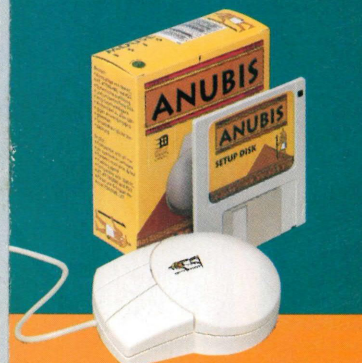
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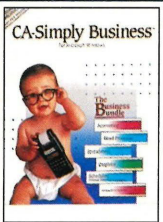
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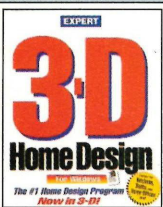


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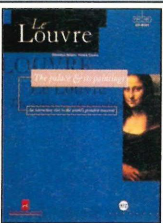
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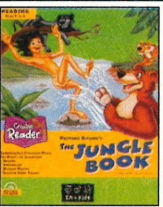
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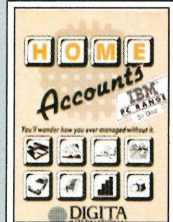
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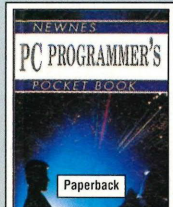
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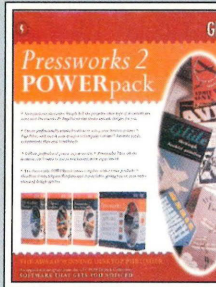
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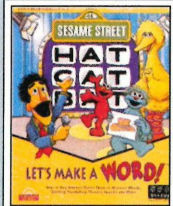
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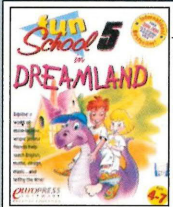
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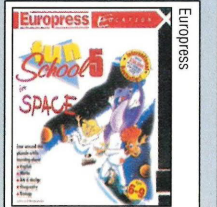
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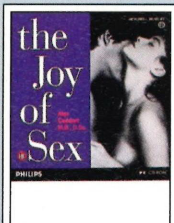
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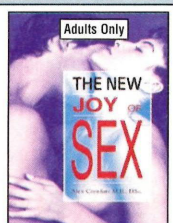
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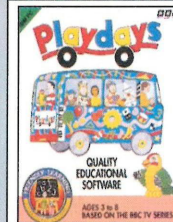


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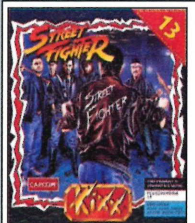


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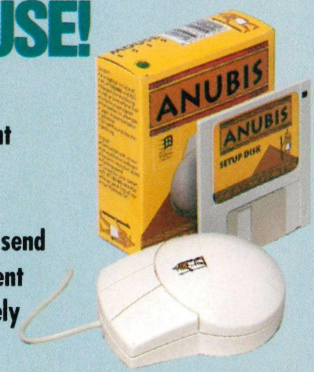
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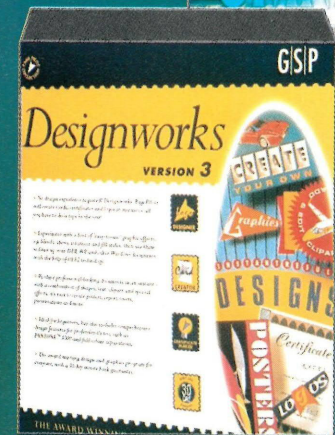
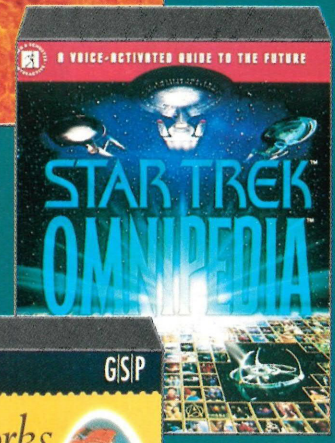
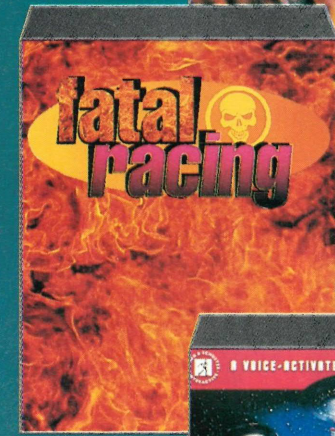
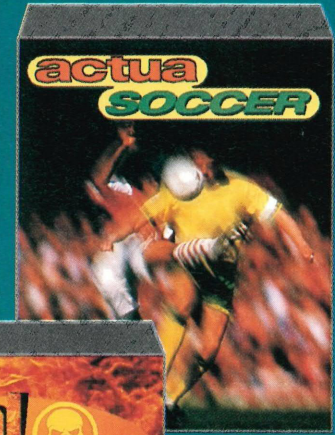


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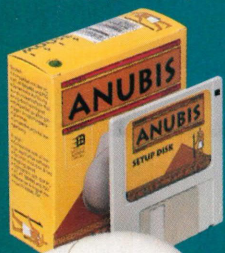
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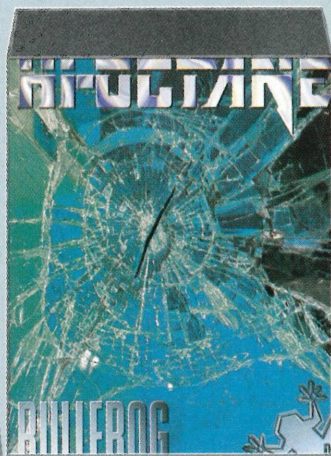
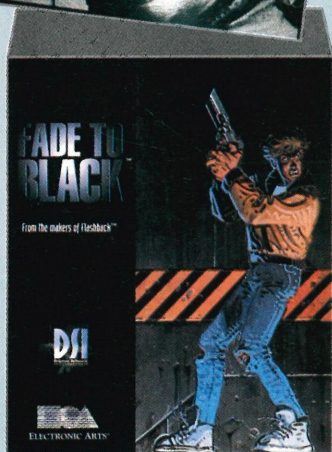
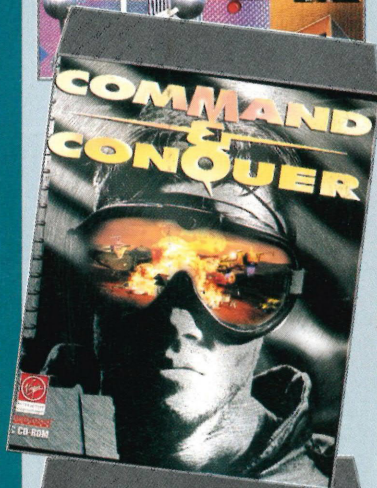
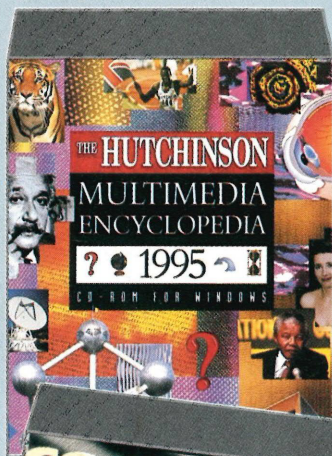
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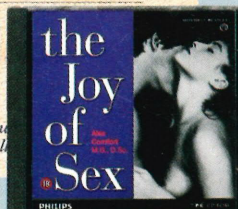
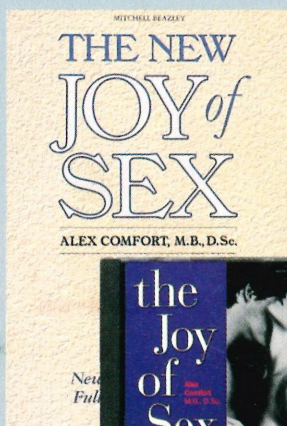
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